

THE
WORKS
OF
M. DE VOLTAIRE.

Translated from the FRENCH.

WITH
Notes, Historical and Critical.

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VOLUME THE TENTH.

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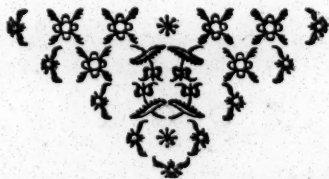
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OBSERVATIONS ON HISTORY.

WILL public authors never cease to give us false conceptions of the past, the present, and the future? In their opinion, surely, mankind must have been born to be deceived; with so much confidence do they pretend, even in this enlightened age, to obtrude upon us the fables of Herodotus; nay, and fables which even Herodotus himself would not have dared to impose upon the Greeks.

What the wiser are we for being so frequently told that Menes was the grandson of Noah? and with what appearance of justice can we affect to ridicule the genealogies of Moreri, while we ourselves compose others no less ridiculous? Noah, (it is affirmed) sent his children to travel into foreign parts; his grand-son, Menes, into Egypt; his other grand son into China; I know not what other grand-son into Sweden; and a younger descendant still into Spain. Travelling, in those days, must have improved the minds of young

gentlemen much more than it does at present. The moderns, in the course of ten or twelve centuries, have hardly been able to acquire an imperfect knowledge in geometry; but these ancient travellers were no sooner arrived in those uncultivated countries, than they began to foretel eclipses. Certain it is, the authentic history of China contains calculations of eclipses for about four thousand years. Confucius mentions thirty-six computations of the same nature, all of which, except four, the mathematical missionaries have found to be just. But these facts do not puzzle the writers who have been pleased to make Noah the grand-father of Fohi; because they are resolved that nothing shall puzzle them.

Other admirers of antiquity would make us believe, that the Egyptians were the wisest people in the universe; because, forsooth, they paid an extreme deference to their priests; and yet it is well known, that the wise priests and legislators of these wise people worshipped monkeys, cats, and onions. We may extol the works of the ancient Egyptians as much as ever we please: such of them, however, as still remains, are at best but shapeless blocks; the finest of their statues not being comparable to the most indifferent of our ordinary artists. The Egyptians must certainly have learned the art of sculpture from the Greeks; there never having been a masterly performance produced in Egypt, that did not proceed from the hand of a Greek. The Egyptians, 'tis said, were profoundly skilled in astronomy: the four sides of a great pyramid are opposed to the four quarters of the world; is not that a convincing proof of the truth of the assertion? But were the Egyptians equal to our Cassini's, our Halley's, our Kepler's, or Tycho-Brahe's?

Brahe's? these good people told Herodotus, with great gravity, that in eleven thousand years, the sun had set twice in the same place where it rises. Such was their astronomy *!

It cost, according to Mr. Rollin, fifty thousand crowns to open and shut the sluices of the lake Mœris. This author is very dear with his sluices; and, besides, his calculations are false. 'There is no sluice, (unless it be a very bad one indeed,) that may not be opened and shut for a crown: but it cost, he says, fifty talents to open and shut these sluices. It must be observed, that in the time of Colbert, a talent was equal to three thousand French livres. Rollin, however, is not aware, that since that period, the current value of our specie is nearly doubled; and that therefore, the expences of opening the sluices of the lake Mœris must have been, according to his computation, about three hundred thousand livres, which is almost two hundred and ninety-seven thousand livres more than enough. All the other calculations in his thirteen volumes seem to be equally inaccurate. The same author affirms, after Herodotus, that in Egypt, a country not near so extensive as France, there was a standing army of four hundred thousand men, every one of whom had a daily allowance of five pounds of bread, and two

* If their knowledge in astronomy did not extend farther than the instances here given, they surely had no great reason to boast of their knowledge. But if we may believe Diodorus Siculus, and other historians besides Herodotus, the Egyptians excelled all the world in the arts of geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and medicine; and it is generally allowed that Egypt was the source from whence Greece derived the first principles of the arts and sciences, both for pleasure and utility.

4 OBSERVATIONS ON

pounds of flesh. This last article makes eight hundred thousand pounds of flesh a-day for the soldiers alone, in a country where they hardly eat any flesh at all. Besides, to whom belonged these four hundred thousand soldiers, while Egypt was divided into several petty principalities? But this is not all; we are further told, that every soldier had six acres of land free from taxes. Two millions four hundred thousand acres of ground that paid nothing to the state! and yet this poor and petty state maintain a greater army than is now-a-days maintained by the grand signor, who is master of Egypt, and other territories, ten times more extensive than it. Lewis XIV. it is true, had four hundred thousand men in arms for some years; but that was an extraordinary and unnatural effort, and that effort hath ruined France.

Would people but take the pains to consult their reason, instead of their memory, and to examine rather than transcribe, we should not see books and errors multiplied without end: nothing would then be committed to writing that had not the recommendation at once of novelty and of truth. The qualification in which historians are commonly defective is a true philosophical spirit; most of them, as they now are, instead of discussing matters of fact with men, content themselves with telling tales to children. Should the fable of Smerdis' ears, or that of Darius*, who gained a king-

* We see nothing at all improbable in this story of Darius, who agreed with the other competitors, that next day they should meet at a certain place, and the crown be conferred on him whose horse should first neigh. This circumstance being known to Oenebarus, an officer of Darius, he

kingdom by the neighing of his horse, or that of Sanacharib, or Sennakerib, or Sannacabon, whose army was miraculously destroyed by rats; should such fables as these, I say, be reprinted in the present age? If men will still repeat such improbable stories, let them at least represent them as no better than they really are.

Is it allowable for a man of sense, born in the eighteenth century, to entertain us with a serious discourse concerning the oracles of Delphos? one while to tell us that this oracle prophesied that Cræsus would boil a sheep and a tortoise in a tortoise-shell? at another, to inform us that battles were won agreeable to the prediction of Apollo? and to assign as the cause of these events the great power of the devil? Mr. Rollin, in his ancient history, undertakes the defence of oracles against Van Dale, Fontenelle, and Basnage. "With regard to Mr. Fontenelle, says he, his book against oracles, drawn from Van Dale, is to be considered merely as a youthful performance." This decree, I am afraid, of Rollin's old age against Fontenelle's youth, will be reversed at the bar of reason, where it seldom happens that rhetoricians gain their cause, when they enter the lists with philosophers. To be convinced of this, we need only attend to what Rollin hath said in his tenth

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he caused a mare to be brought to his master's horse on the very spot assigned as the scene of determination, and next day the steed no sooner approached the place than he began to neigh. That such an agreement should be made, and such a stratagem practised among a barbarous people, is not at all unlikely; as an analogous instance, we might quote from scripture the device of Jacob's peeled sticks when he fed the flocks of Laban.

6 OBSERVATIONS ON

volume, where he means to speak of physics. He there alledges, that Archimedes, in order to demonstrate the surprising effects of the mechanical powers, to his good friend the king of Syracuse, ordered a galley, doubly loaded, to be placed on the solid earth, and then pushed it gently into the stream with one finger, without so much as coming out of his chariot. This, 'tis plain, is the language of a rhetorician; had he had the least smattering of philosophy, he would at once have perceived the absurdity of what he asserts*.

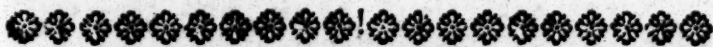
Would we improve the present time to the best advantage, we ought not, methinks, to squander away ~~our~~ lives in brooding over ancient fables. I would advise a young man to acquire a slight knowledge of these remote ages; but I would have him to begin the serious study of history at that period where it becomes truly interesting to us, which, in my opinion, is towards the end of the fifteenth century. From that æra history is rendered more authentic, chiefly by means of the art of printing, which was then concealed. The general face of Europe was invented: the Turks, who overspread it, banished polite literature from Constantinople; but it flourished in Italy: it was established in France; and it went to polish the rude manners of the Germans, the English, and other northern nations. A new religion delivered one half of Europe from papal subjection. A new system of politicks took place: by the help of the

* That Archimedes carried the mechanical powers to a surprising pitch, of exertion is certainly true; and whether from a complication of these powers it might not be possible to do something like what is here mentioned, we shall leave philosophers to determine.

mariner's compass, the Cape of Good Hope was doubled, and the trade between Europe and China was rendered more easy than that between Paris and Madrid. America was discovered; a new world was conquered, and our own was almost totally changed: the christian nations of Europe became a kind of immense republic, in which the balance of power was established upon a more sure and solid foundation than it had ever been in ancient Greece. A perpetual intercourse unites all the parts of this vast body together, in spite of the wars excited by the ambition of kings, and even in spite of religious wars, which are still more destructive. The arts, which are the glory of every kingdom, were carried to a degree of perfection which they never attained in Greece and Rome. This is the history which every man ought to know: in this you will find no chimerical prediction, no lying oracles, no false miracles, no stupid fables; in this every thing is true, almost to the most minute circumstances, about which, however, none but little souls will give them great concern. To us every thing relates, every thing contributes to our advantage. The plate from which we eat, our furniture, our wants, our new pleasures, all conspire to remind us that America, the East Indies, and, of consequence, the whole world has, within these two centuries and a half, been reunited by the industry of our forefathers. We cannot take a single step that does not recal to our memory the great change which hath lately been brought about in the world. Here are a hundred cities which were formerly subject to the pope, but which are now free. There have been established, at least for a time, the privileges of the Germanic body: here is formed the most perfect

8 NEW REFLECTIONS

republic in a country, which is every moment in danger of being swallowed up by the sea: England hath united true liberty with royalty: Sweden copies the glorious example; but her sister Denmark has not the prudence to follow the same course. If I travel into Germany, France, or Spain, I every where find the traces of that inveterate quarrel, which hath subsisted so long between the houses of Austria and Bourbon; houses united by so many treaties, all which have been productive of the most cruel and bloody wars. There is not a single man in Europe, whose fortune has not, in some measure, been influenced by those great revolutions. And does it become us after this to trifle away our time with Salmanazar, and Mardokempad, and with curious, but useless enquiries concerning the anecdotes of Cayamarrat the Persian, and of Sabaco Metophis. No man sure, when arrived at the age of maturity, and engaged in the management of weighty and important affairs, will sit down to relate the tales of his nurse.



NEW REFLECTIONS ON HISTORY.

I Doubt not but the same change which hath lately happened in physics may soon take place in the manner of writing history. New discoveries have banished the old systems. One would wish too to study the characters of mankind with all that interesting particularity of circumstance, which now constitutes the foundation of natural philosophy.

We now begin to give little credit to the adventure of Curtius, who shut up a gulph, by
throw-

throwing himself and his horse into the opening; the shields which came down from heaven, and all the pretty talismans which the Gods were wont, with so much liberality, to present to mankind; the Vestals, who set a ship afloat by the charm of their girdle: in a word, the whole group of those famous fooleries, with which ancient histories are stuffed, are now become the objects of ridicule and derision. In the same light we consider what Mr. Rollin has related, with so much gravity, in his ancient history, of king Nabis, who complimented all those who gave him money with the enjoyment of his wife, and placed such as refused to contribute in the arms of a handsome doll, resembling the queen exactly in outward appearance, but armed, under her petticoats, with sharp iron points. Who, when he hears so many authors repeating, one after another, that the famous Otho, archbishop of Mayence, was besieged and devoured by an army of rats, in 698; that Gascony was deluged with showers of blood in 1017; and that two armies of serpents fought a battle near Tournay, in 1059: who, I say, on hearing such improbable stories as these, can refrain from laughing? prodigies, predictions, and fiery trials, &c. are now held in the same degree of credit and estimation with the fables of Herodotus.

I here mean to treat of modern history; in which you will find no dolls embracing courtiers, no bishops devoured by rats.

Some people take great pains, (and not without reason,) to mark the precise day on which a battle was fought. They relate every article of a treaty; they describe the pomp and solemnity of a coronation, the ceremony of receiving a cap, and even the entry of an ambassador, without for-

getting either his Swifts or lackeys. It is very proper that public records should be kept of every thing, that so we may be able to consult them on occasion; and indeed I consider all our large books at present as so many dictionaries. But after having read the descriptions of three or four thousand battles, and the substance of some hundreds of treaties, I do not find myself one jot wiser than when I began; because from them I learn nothing but events. The battle of Charles Martel gives me no more insight into the characters of the French and Saracens, than does the victory which Tamerlane gained over Bajazer, into those of the Turks and Tartars. I own indeed, that when I read the memoirs of cardinal de Retz, and of madame de Motteville, I know every word of what the queen-mother said to Mr. de Jersey; I see how the coadjutor assisted in raising and strengthening the barricadoes; and I could almost make an abstract of the long conversations which he had with madame de Bouillon. This serves very well to gratify my curiosity; but contributes little to my instruction. There are some books that contain the true or false anecdotes of a court. Whoever hath seen courts, or is desirous of seeing them, is as fond of these illustrious trifles, as a country lady is of hearing the news of the paltry village from which she came.

At bottom both are guided by the same principle; and the motive that actuates the one is as noble as that which influences the other. Under the reign of Henry IV. the anecdotes of Charles IX. were the subject of conversation; and during the first years of Lewis XIV. the duke de Bellegarde was the favourite topic of discourse. All these trifles are preserved for an age or two, and then sink into eternal oblivion.

But the misfortune is, that in order to attain this superficial kind of knowledge, we neglect studies infinitely more useful and important. I want to know what was the strength of a nation before a war, and whether that war contributed to increase or diminish its strength. Was Spain richer before the conquest of the new world than it is at present? how much more populous was it in the time of Charles V. than in that of Philip IV? Why was it that Amsterdam, about two centuries ago, hardly contained twenty thousand souls? Why, at present, does it contain two hundred and forty thousand? and what is the most accurate method of determining the difference? How much more populous is England now than it was under Henry VIII? Is it true (as is alledged in the Persian Letters,) that the earth wants inhabitants; and that it is depopulated in comparison of what it was some two thousand years ago? Rome, it is true, contained at that time many more citizens than it does at present. I acknowledge too, that Alexandria and Carthage were great cities; but Paris, London, Constantinople, Grand Cairo, Amsterdam, and Hamburgh, were not then in being. There were three hundred nations in ancient Gaul; but these three hundred nations were not equal to ours, either in number of men, or in the knowledge and practice of the arts of peace. Germany was formerly a forest, now it is covered with a hundred opulent cities. One would be almost tempted to think that the spirit of invective, wearied with persecuting individuals, had attacked the whole human kind. The constant and general complaint is, that the world daily becomes at once more vicious and less populous. What then? have we any reason to regret our not having

lived in those times, when there was no high-way from Bourdeaux to Orleans, and when Paris was a small village, the inhabitants of which were perpetually cutting each other's throats? People may say what they will, but Europe certainly contains more men than it did formerly, and these men are more active and industrious. One may easily know how much Europe hath increased in people during the course of any number of years; for in almost all your great cities, a list of the births is published at the end of the year; and according to the sure and accurate method lately laid down by a Dutch gentleman, equally ingenious and indefatigable, one may calculate the number of people from that of the births.

This then will be a principal object of attention to every one that would read history like a citizen and philosopher. But he will take care not to confine his attention to this particular alone; he will enquire what hath been the prevailing virtue and vice of a nation; why it hath been powerful or weak by sea; and how and in what degree it has been enriched during the course of a century; these two last articles may be fully ascertained from the list of exportations. He will endeavour to learn how the arts and manufactures have been established, and will trace them through all their windings and turnings, in their progress from one country to another. In a word, the revolutions in the manners of the people, and in the laws of the land, will be the great object of his most serious study and attention. Thus, instead of obtaining a partial knowledge of the history of kings and courts, he will acquire a thorough insight into the characters of mankind.

In vain do I read the annals of France ; all our histories are silent with regard to these interesting particulars. None of them have chosen for their motto, *Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto*. We ought then, in my opinion, artfully to interweave these useful enquiries with the general contexture of events. This appears to me to be the only method of writing modern history like a true politician and a true philosopher. To write ancient history is, in effect, to mix a few truths with a thousand falsehoods. Perhaps the use of this history is much the same with that of ancient fables ; the great events which it contains are the constant subjects of our paintings, our poems, our conversation ; and from thence too we derive the grand outlines of morality. We should read the adventures of Alexander, as we do the labours of Hercules. In fine, ancient history seems to have the same relation to modern, that old medals have to the current coin ; the former are repositied in the cabinets of the curious, the latter circulates through the world for the use and convenience of mankind.

But to undertake and execute such a work, the author must be possessed of several kinds of knowledge besides that of books ; he must be encouraged by the government, as much, at least, for what he may perform, as were the Boileau's, the Racine's, and the Valincourt's, for what they never performed ; so that what a witty clerk of the treasury said of these gentlemen may never be applicable to him. " We never saw any thing belonging to them but their seal."

ANECDOTES relating to PETER the GREAT,
Emperor of RUSSIA.

THE many important and difficult enterprises undertaken and executed by Peter I. none of which had ever entered into the thoughts of any of his predecessors, justly procured him the surname of Great. Before his time, the knowledge of the Russians was wholly confined to those simple arts which are the result of mere necessity. So powerful is the influence of habit over the generality of mankind, and so little desirous are they of what they don't understand; the genius unfolds itself with so much difficulty, and is so easily suppressed by the slightest obstacles, that there is great reason to believe, that all nations continued, for thousands of ages, in a state of the most profound ignorance, till, at last, such men as Peter the Great arose, at that precise period when it was proper they should arise.

A young gentleman of Geneva, called Le Fort, happened to be at Moscow, with the Danish ambassador, about the year 1695. He had learned the Russian tongue in a very short time, and spoke almost all the European languages. Peter the Great, who was then nineteen years of age, saw Le Fort, conceived a liking for him, took him at first into his service, and afterwards admitted him into the most intimate familiarity. From him he learned, that there was another manner of living and of reigning, than that, which, from time immemorial, had been unhappily established throughout his vast empire; and, had it not been for this young gentleman, Russia had still remained in its original state of rudeness and barbarity.

Peter

Peter must have been born with a soul truly great; otherwise he never would have listened so readily to the instructions of a stranger, nor been able to divest himself of all the prejudices of the prince and of the Russian. He soon perceived that he had a nation and an empire to form anew; but he was possessed of no means equal to the accomplishment of such an arduous and noble enterprise. From that time he took a resolution of leaving his dominions, and of going, like Prometheus, to borrow the heavenly fire to animate his compatriots. This celestial spark he went to search for among the Dutch, who, about three centuries before, were as destitute of it as the Russians themselves. He could not, however, carry his scheme into execution so soon as he could have wished. He was obliged to support a war against the Turks, or rather against the Tartars, in 1696; and it was not till after he had conquered his enemies, that he left his own dominions, and went to learn all the arts which were utterly unknown in Russia. The master of the largest empire in the universe lived almost two years at Amsterdam, and in the village of Sardam, under the name of Peter Michaeloff; though his common appellation was Mr. Peter Bas. He ordered his name to be enrolled among the carpenters of that famous village, which furnished ships to almost all Europe. He handled the adz and the compass; and, after having laboured in his shop at ship-building, he studied geography, geometry, and history. The mob at first crowded about him; but he soon checked their curiosity, by repelling his impertinent visitors with a good deal of rudeness and severity, which, however, those people, so remarkable for pride and resentment, bore with great patience.

patience. The first language he learned was the Dutch : he then applied himself to the German, which appeared to him a very smooth and harmonious tongue, and which he ordered to be spoke at his own court.

He acquired likewise a smattering of the English, in his voyage to London ; but he never understood the French, which hath since become the language of Petersburg, under the empress Elizabeth, in proportion as the nation has been civilized and polished.

His stature was tall ; his countenance was noble and majestic, but sometimes disfigured by convulsions, which even altered the features of his face. This defect in his organs was commonly attributed to the effects of poison, which was said to have been given him by his sister Sophia. But the true poison was the wine and brandy, in which, trusting too much to the strength of his constitution, he frequently indulged to excess.

He conversed as frankly with a common mechanic as with the general of an army. In this he acted, not like a barbarian, who makes no distinction between men of different ranks, nor like a popular prince, who wants to ingratiate himself with all the world ; he acted like a man who was desirous of acquiring knowledge. He loved the women as much as his rival, the king of Sweden, dreaded them ; and, as in eating, so in matters of gallantry, every thing was equally good. He valued himself much more on being able to drink a great quantity, than on possessing a nice and exquisite taste, capable of distinguishing your fine and delicious wines.

It is a common observation, that kings and legislators should not allow themselves to be hurried

ried away by the violence of passion ; but no man was ever more passionate, or less merciful, than Peter the Great. This is one of those defects in the character of a king, which it is impossible to excuse by a frank confession ; at last, however, he became sensible of his failing, and, in his second journey to Holland, he said to a magistrate of that country, " I have reformed my subjects, but have not been able to reform myself." It must be owned, however, that the cruelties with which he is reproached were as customary at the court of Moscow, as at that of Morocco. Nothing was more common, than to see a czar inflicting an hundred lashes with a bull's pizzle upon the naked shoulders of one of the first officers of the crown, or of a maid of honour, for having neglected their duty thro' drunkenness ; or trying the goodness of his sabre, by cutting off the head of a criminal. Peter had performed some of these Russian ceremonies. Le Fort, indeed, had gained such an ascendant over him, as to be able, sometimes, to stop his hand when he was just upon the point of striking ; but, unhappily, Le Fort was not always in his company.

His journey to Holland, and especially his taste for the arts, which now began to unfold itself, softened his manners a little ; for it is the natural tendency of all the arts to render men more humane and sociable. He often breakfasted with a geographer, with whom he made sea-charts. He passed whole days with the famous Ruisch, who first invented the art of making those curious injections, which have carried medicine to so high a degree of perfection, and have freed it from its former nauseousness. Peter gave himself, to the age of twenty-two, such an education, as a Dutch mechanic

mechanic would have given a son, in whom he perceived some sparks of genius ; and this education was much superior to what any emperor of Russia before him had ever received. At the same time, he sent the young Muscovites to travel and improve themselves in all the countries of Europe. But his first attempts of this nature were attended with little success. His new disciples did not imitate the example of their master ; there was even one of them that had been sent to Venice, who never came out of his chamber, that so he might have no cause to reproach himself with having seen any other country than Russia. This strong aversion to foreign countries was infused into them by their priests, who alledged that travelling was an unpardonable crime in a Christian, for the same reason that the Jews, in the Old Testament, had been forbid to assume the manners of their neighbours, more rich and more industrious than themselves.

In 1698 he left Amsterdam, and went to England, not in the character of a ship-wright, nor in that of a sovereign, but under the name of a Russian gentleman who travelled for his instruction*. He saw and examined every thing : he even went to the representation of an English comedy,

* Peter expressed a desire to see the manner in which British criminals were punished with death ; but, it proving what is called a maiden session at the Old Baily, he grew impatient and complained to king William, who told him he could not help his being disappointed, as no person had been condemned, and he had no right to take away the life of any subject until he should receive the sentence of the law. " If that be the case, (said Peter) you may take any of my retinue, and cause them to be executed in the English manner." But this offer his Britannick majesty thought proper to decline,

though

though he did not understand a word of it; but he found in the play-house an actress, called Miss Crofts, from whom he received some favours, without having the generosity to make her fortune.

King William caused a convenient house to be fitted up for his accommodation, which in London is a very great compliment. Palaces are not common in that immense city: there you hardly see any thing but low houses, with paultry gates, like those of our shops, without court or garden. Indifferent as the house was, the czar found it too handsome; and, that he might have the better opportunity of improving himself in sea-affairs, he took up his lodging in Wapping. He frequently dressed himself in the habit of a sailor, and made use of this disguise to engage several seamen in his service.

It was at London that he formed the design of drawing the Volga and the Tanais into the same channel. He even intended to join the Dwina to these two rivers by a canal; and thus to re-unite the Ocean and the Black and Caspian Seas. The English, whom he carried along with him, served him but poorly in this great project; and the Turks, who took Asoph from him in 1712, opposed the execution of such a vast undertaking*.

As he happened to want money at London, the merchants of that city offered him an hundred thousand crowns, provided he would grant them a liberty of transporting tobacco into Russia. This was not only a great novelty in Muscovy, but was even inconsistent with the established religion. The

* If we may believe Capt. Perry, whom Peter engaged as chief engineer in this great work, the English were treated with equal ingratitude and brutality.

patriarch had excommunicated every one that smoked tobacco, because their enemies, the Turks, smoked; and the clergy considered it as one of the greatest privileges of their order, to hinder the Russians from smoking. The czar, however, accepted the hundred thousand crowns, and undertook to introduce the practice of smoking even among the clergy themselves. He likewise resolved to make several other innovations in the religious system.

Kings are commonly wont to make presents to such illustrious travellers; and the present which William made to Peter was a genteel compliment, worthy of them both; he gave him a yacht of twenty-five guns, an excellent sailer, gilt like a Roman altar, and stored with all kinds of provisions; and the whole ship's crew cheerfully consented that they should be included in the present. In this yacht, of which himself was the chief pilot, Peter returned to Holland to re-visit his carpenters. From thence, about the middle of the year 1698, he went to Vienna, where there was no necessity for his tarrying so long as at London, because, at the court of the grave Leopold, there was much more ceremony to be performed, and far less instruction to be gained. After having seen Vienna, he intended to have gone to Venice, and thence to Rome; but a civil war, occasioned by his absence, and by the permission of smoking, obliged him immediately to return to Moscow. The strelits, the ancient troops of the czars, somewhat akin to the janissaries, as turbulent, as undisciplined, less brave, but not less barbarous, were instigated to revolt by some monks and abbots, half Greeks and half Russians, who persuaded them that God was highly provoked at the intro-

introduction of tobacco into Muscovy; and thus threw the whole nation into a flame about this important quarrel. Peter, who was fully apprized of the great power of the monks and strelits, had taken his measures accordingly. He had a numerous body of forces, composed almost entirely of foreigners, well disciplined, well paid, and well armed, and who smoked under the command of general Gordon, a man thoroughly versed in the art of war, and no friend to the monks. This was the very point in which the sultan Osman had failed, when endeavouring, like Peter, to reform his janissaries, and having no power to oppose to their refractory spirit, he was so far from being able to reform them, that he lost his life in the attempt.

Peter's armies were now put upon the same footing with those of the other European princes. He employed his English and Dutch carpenters in building ships at Veronitz, upon the Tanais, four hundred leagues from Moscow. He embellished the towns, provided for their safety, made highways five hundred leagues in length, established manufactures of every kind; and, what clearly shews the profound ignorance in which the Russians had formerly lived, their first manufacture was that of pins. They now make flowered velvets and gold and silver stuffs at Moscow. Such mighty things may be performed by one man, when he is an absolute sovereign, and knows how to exert his authority!

The war he waged against Charles XII. in order to recover the provinces which the Swedes had formerly taken from the Russians, notwithstanding the bad success with which it was at first attended, did not hinder him from continuing his reformation,

tions, both in church and state; and accordingly, at the end of 1699, he ordered that the ensuing year should commence in the month of January, and not in the month of September. The Russians, who thought that God had created the world in September, were surprised to hear that their czar had power to alter what God had established. This alteration began with the eighteenth century, and was ushered in by a grand jubilee, which the czar appointed by his own authority; for having suppressed the dignity of the patriarch, he exercised all the functions of that office himself. It is not true, as is commonly reported, that he put the patriarch into the mad-house of Moscow. Whenever he had a mind, at once to divert himself and inflict punishment, he was wont to say to the delinquent, "I make you a fool;" and the person to whom he gave this pretty appellation, were he even the first nobleman of the kingdom, was forced to carry a bauble, jacket, and bells, and to divert the court in quality of his czarish majesty's fool. This task, however, he did not impose upon the patriarch; he contented himself with simply suppressing an employment, which those, who had enjoyed it, had abused to such a degree, that they obliged the emperors to walk before them once a year, holding the bridle of the patriarchal horse; a ceremony which Peter the Great immediately abolished.

In order to have more subjects, he resolved to have fewer monks; and accordingly ordained, that, for the future, no person under fifty years of age should be allowed to take the habit of that order; the consequence of which was, that in his time, of all the countries that contained monks, Russia contained the fewest; but after his death,

this weed, which he had so happily extirpated, regenerated afresh, owing partly to that natural foible of all monks, the desire of enlarging their numbers, and partly to the foolish indulgence of some governments, in tolerating such a pernicious practice.

He likewise made some prudent regulations relating to the clergy, and tending to the reformation of their lives, although his own, in all conscience, was licentious enough; but he wisely judged, that many things are allowable in a sovereign, that would be extremely indecent in a curate. Before his time, the women lived perpetually secluded from the men. In Russia it was a thing unheard of, that a husband should ever see the lady he was to marry. The first acquaintance he contracted with her was at church; and one of the nuptial presents was a large handful of twigs, which the bridegroom sent to the bride, as a kind of warning, that, on the first transgression, she had reason to expect a little matrimonial correction. Husbands had even a power of killing their wives with impunity; but such wives as usurped the same right over their husbands, were buried alive.

Peter abolished the bundles of twigs; prohibited the husbands from killing their wives; and, in order to match the two sexes with greater prudence and equality, and by that means to render the married state more happy, he introduced the custom of making the men and women eat together, and of presenting the suitors to their mistresses before the celebration of the marriage. In a word, he prosecuted his salutary schemes with such vigour and resolution, that he at last established the social state throughout all his dominions.

Every

Every one knows the regulation he made for obliging his noblemen and their ladies to hold assemblies, where all transgressions against the Russian politeness were punished by obliging the delinquent to drink a large glass of brandy, so that the honourable company frequently went home much intoxicated, and little corrected. But it was a work of no small merit to introduce even a kind of imperfect society among a people, who had hitherto lived in a state of the grossest barbarity. He even ventured to exhibit some dramatic performances. The princess Natalia, one of his sisters, wrote some tragedies in the Russian tongue, not unlike to those of Shakespear, in which tyrants and harlequins form the principal characters. The band of music was composed of Russian fiddles, upon which they played with bulls pizzles. They have now French comedies and Italian operas at Petersburg; in every thing, grandeur and taste hath succeeded to barbarity. One of the most difficult attempts of this great founder of the Russian empire was to shorten the coats of his subjects, and to make them shave their beards. This was the subject of great murmuring, and of many complaints. How was it possible to teach a whole nation to make their cloaths after the German fashion, and to handle the razor? arduous, however, as was the undertaking, it was at last accomplished, by placing at the gates of every town a sufficient number of taylor and barbers; the former clipped the coats, and the latter shaved the beards, of all those who entered; and such as refused to submit to these regulations, were obliged to pay a fine equal to forty pence of our coin. But, in a short time, the people chused much rather to part with their beards than their money.

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The women, who greatly preferred a smooth to a rough chin, assisted the czar in this reformation: to him they were obliged for being exempted from the discipline of the whip, for being indulged with the company of the men, and for having smoother and more decent faces to kiss.

While Peter amused himself in making these reforms, and while he was engaged in a bloody war against Charles XII. he laid, in 1704, the foundations of the large city and harbour of Petersburg, in a morass, where there was not before so much as a single cottage. He laboured with his own hands in building the first house: no difficulties were sufficient to abate his ardour: workmen were compelled to come from the frontiers of Astracan, and from the coasts of the Black and Caspian Seas, to the coast of the Baltick. Upwards of an hundred thousand men perished in the undertaking, partly by the severe labour they were obliged to undergo, and partly by the want and hardships to which they were exposed; but, notwithstanding these obstructions, the city was at last raised. The harbours of Archangel, of Astracan, and of Veronick, were likewise built.

To defray the expences of executing so many mighty projects, of supporting fleets in the Baltick Sea, and of maintaining an hundred thousand regular troops, the public revenue, at that time, was only about twenty millions of livres. I have seen an exact account of it, in the possession of a gentleman who had been an ambassador at Petersburg. But the wages of the workmen were proportioned to the wealth of the kingdom. It ought to be remembered, that the construction of the pyramids cost the kings of Egypt nothing but

onions. I repeat it again ; we have only to exert our utmost endeavours ; we can never exert them enough.

After having, as it were, created his nation, Peter thought he might take the liberty of gratifying his own humour, by espousing his mistress, a mistress who well deserved to be his wife ; and accordingly the marriage was solemnized in public, in the year 1712. This lady was the famous Catharine, originally an orphan, born in the village of Ringen, in Estonia, brought up by a vicar out of mere charity, married to a Livonian soldier, and taken prisoner by a party of the enemy two days after her marriage. She was first a servant in the family of general Bauer, and afterwards in that of Menzikoff, who, from a pastry-cook's boy, became a prince of the empire, and the first subject in the nation. At last she was married to Peter the Great ; and, after his death, became empress of Russia, a dignity to which her great virtues and abilities gave her a just claim. She softened the ferocity of her husband's manners to a very considerable degree ; and saved many more backs from the knout, and many more heads from the ax, than ever general Le Fort had been able to do. The people loved her, they revered her. A German baron, a master of horse to an abbé de Fulde, would have disdained to have married Catharine ; but Peter thought, that with him merit did not need to be set off by a genealogy of thirty-two descents. Princes are apt to believe, that there is no grandeur but what they confer ; and that with them all men are equal. Certain it is, birth makes no more difference between one man and another than between an ass whose fire carried dung, and an ass whose father carried

carried relicks. Education makes a great difference, talents make a greater, and fortune the greatest of all. Catharine had received, from her curate of Estonia, an education as good, at least, as any lady of Moscow, or of Archangel; and she was born with greater abilities, and with a more exalted soul. She had managed the family of general Bauer, and that of prince Menzikoff, without being able either to read or write. Whoever is capable to rule a large family is likewise capable to rule a kingdom. This perhaps may seem to be a paradox; but undoubtedly it requires the same oeconomy, the same wisdom and resolution, to command a hundred persons, as to command several thousand.

The czarowitz Alexis, son to the czar, who, like him, had married a slave, and, like him, had privately quitted Muscovy, had not the same success in his two undertakings. He even lost his life in an ill-judged attempt to copy the example of his father. This was one of the most shocking acts of severity that ever sovereign exercised: but what reflects great honour upon the memory of the empress Catharine, she had no hand in the untimely fate of this prince, who was sprung from another bed, and who hated every thing that his father loved; Catharine was never accused of having acted the cruel step-mother. The great crime of the unhappy Alexis was, that he was too much a Russian, and that he disapproved of all the noble and illustrious things which his father had done for the glory and emolument of the nation. One day, as he heard some Muscovites complain of the hard labour they were obliged to endure in building Petersburg, "Take comfort, said he, this city shall not stand long." When he ought

to have been attending his father, in those journeys of five or six hundred leagues which the czar frequently undertook, he pretended to be sick: the physicians purged him severely for a disease with which he was not troubled; and so many medicines, joined to great quantities of brandy, at once impaired his health and altered his temper. He discovered at first an inclination to learning; he understood geometry and history, and had learned the German language; but he neither loved war, nor would he study the art of it; and this was the fault with which his father chiefly reproached him. He had been married in 1711, to the princess of Wolfenbuttle, sister to the empress, the wife of Charles IV. This marriage proved very unhappy; the company of the princess was often abandoned for a debauch of brandy, and for the caresses of one Afrosina, a Finland girl, tall, handsome, and agreeable. Some people pretend that the princess died of grief, if, indeed, grief can ever be the occasion of death; and that afterwards the czarowitz named Afrosina privately, in 1716, just at the time when the empress Catharine brought him a brother; a present with which he could willingly have dispensed.

The disgust between the father and son became every day more inveterate, till at last, in 1716, Peter threatened to disinherit the prince, and the latter declared his intention of taking the monkish habit.

In 1717, the czar resumed his travels, as well from political views, as from the motive of curiosity; and accordingly he now repaired to France. Had his son been inclined to revolt, had he in reality secured a party in his interest, this was the time to carry his scheme into execution; but, instead

instead of continuing in Russia and gaining partisans, he went to travel like his father ; after having, with great difficulty, collected a few thousand ducats, which he privately borrowed. He now threw himself into the arms of the emperor Charles VI. the brother-in-law of his deceased wife. For some time he lived *incognito* at Vienna ; from thence he went to Naples, where he remained almost a year, without either the czar, or any one in Russia, knowing where he was.

While the son lay thus concealed, the father was at Paris, where he was treated with all the respect and deference which he had met with in other countries, and with a politeness which he could find no where but in France. If he went to see a manufacture, and was charmed with any particular piece of work, he was sure, next day, to receive it in a present. He went to dine with the duke d'Antin, at Petitbourg, where the first thing presented to his view was his own picture at full length, with the same dress which he wore. When he went to see the royal collection of medals, the minters struck several medals of every kind before him, and presented them to him with great politeness ; at last they struck one, which they purposely let fall at his feet, and left him to pick it up ; on this he saw himself engraved in a very elegant manner, with these words, PETER THE GREAT. The reverse was a Fame, with this inscription, *Vires acquirit eundo* ; an allegory equally just and flattering to a prince, who really encreased his knowledge by his travels.

Upon seeing the tomb of cardinal de Richelieu, and the statue of that great minister, worthy of the personage whom it represents, Peter discovered one of those violent transports, and expressed

pressed one of those noble sentiments, which none but great souls are capable of feeling. He mounted the tomb, and embracing the statue, "Great statesman, said he, why was you not born in my time; I would have given you one half of my empire, to teach me to govern the other." A gentleman, possessed of less enthusiasm than the czar, upon hearing the explanation of these words, which were originally pronounced in the Russian language, observed, "That if he had given him one half of it, he would not have been long able to preserve the other."

The czar, after having traversed France, where every thing disposes the mind to gentleness and clemency, returned to his own country, and there resumed all his former severity. Having prevailed upon his son to leave Naples and repair to Petersburg, the young prince was conducted from thence to Moscow, and brought into the presence of his father, who immediately deprived him of his right of succession, and made him sign a solemn deed of renunciation, about the latter end of January 1713, in consideration of which he promised to grant him his life.

It was not however improbable, that such an act might one day be reversed; in order, therefore, to strengthen it the more, Peter forgetting his paternal character, and considering himself only as the founder of an empire, which his son perhaps might replunge into barbarity, he caused a process to be openly commenced against this unhappy prince, touching some reservations he was supposed to have made in the act of renunciation, which had been extorted from him.

An assembly of bishops, abbots, and professors, was convoked; these reverend judges found, that,
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in the Old Testament, those who cursed their father and mother were worthy of death : that, indeed, David had pardoned his son Absalom, who had revolted against him ; but that God had never pardoned him. Such was their opinion, without coming to any conclusion ; and yet, it was the same in fact as if they had signed a warrant for his execution. Alexis had never cursed his father ; he had never revolted like Absalom ; he had never lain publicly with the king's concubines ; he had travelled indeed without the king's permission, and he had writ some letters to his friends, in which he had only expressed his hopes that they would, one day, remember him in Russia. But, notwithstanding those favourable circumstances, of the hundred and twenty-four secular judges who sat on his trial, there was not one that did not vote for his death ; and such of them as could not write caused their names to be signed by others. A report has been spread abroad in Europe, and it has been often committed to writing, that the czar caused to be translated, from the Spanish into the Russian language, the criminal process against Don Carlos, that unfortunate prince and heir of a great kingdom, whom his father Philip II. threw into prison, where he miserably ended his days : but the truth is, there never was any process commenced against Don Carlos ; nor was the manner of his death, whether natural or violent, ever fully known. Besides, Peter, of all princes the most despotic, needed not any precedents. What is certain is, that the son died in his bed the day after the trial, and Peter had then at Moscow one of the best furnished apothecaries shops in Europe. It is probable, however,

that the death of prince Alexis, the heir of the most extensive empire in the universe, and unanimously condemned by those who were now his father's subjects, and who, had he lived, would have one day become his, might be owing to the terrible shock which a sentence so fatal and unprecedented must have given to his constitution. The father went to see his son when just upon the point of expiring, and is said to have shed some tears. *Infelix, utcumque ferent ea fata nepotes.* But notwithstanding his tears, the wheels were covered with the broken limbs of his son's friends. He even beheaded his own brother-in-law, the count Lapuchin, brother to his wife Ottokesa Lapuchin, whom he had divorced, and uncle to prince Alexis, whose confessor likewise lost his head. If the Russians have been civilized, it must be confessed they have paid dearly for their politeness.

The remaining part of the czar's life was spent in the prosecution of those great designs, and of those noble schemes and projects, which seemed to efface the memory of his cruelties, which, after all, perhaps, were absolutely necessary. He frequently made speeches to his court and council; in one of these he told them, that he had sacrificed his son to the safety and welfare of his dominions.

After the glorious peace which he at last concluded with Sweden, in 1721, by which he obtained the whole of Livonia, Estonia, and Ingermania, and the half of Carelia and Vibourg, the states of Russia bestowed upon him the name of Great, of Father of his Country, and of Emperor. The states were represented by the senate, who solemnly conferred these titles upon him in presence of the count de Kinski, minister of the

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emperor ; of Mr. de Campredon, envoy of France, and the ambassadors of Prussia and Holland. The European princes have been gradually accustomed to give this title of emperor to the Russian sovereign ; but this dignity does not hinder the French ambassador from taking the right-hand of those of Russia upon all occasions.

The Russians ought undoubtedly to regard Peter as the greatest of men. From the coasts of the Baltick Sea to the frontiers of China, he is a hero : but ought he to be considered in the same light among us ? Is he comparable to our Condés, or our Villars, in valour, or to an infinite number of our cotemporaries, in knowledge, in genius, and in morals ? No : but he was a king, and a king badly educated ; and he performed what, perhaps, a thousand sovereigns in his situation would never have accomplished. He was possessed of that strength of mind, which raises a man above all kinds of prejudice, as well with regard to the past as the present. He was an architect who built with brick, and who, in any other country, would have built with marble. Had he reigned in France, he would have carried the arts, from the condition in which they now are, to the highest degree of perfection. His having five and twenty large ships on the Baltick Sea was an object of admiration : in our ports he would have had two hundred.

From a view of what he has done at Petersburg, one may easily judge what he would have done at Paris. What surprises me the most, is, the little reason there was to hope that such a man as Peter the Great should ever have arisen at Moscow. It was as all the men who have ever inhabited Russia is

to one, that a genius, so different from the general character of their nation, would never be bestowed upon any Russian; and it was still farther, as sixteen million, the number of the Russians at present, is to one, that this genius would not fall to the lot of the czar in particular. But, notwithstanding these improbabilities, the thing has actually happened. A prodigious number of favourable circumstances must have concurred; an infinite series of ages must have elapsed before nature produced the man who invented the plough, or him to whom we are indebted for the art of weaving. The Russians now-a-days are not surprised at their rapid progress; in less than fifty years they have become so familiarly acquainted with all the arts, that one would imagine they had been in possession of them for a much greater length of time. There are still vast tracts of land in Africa that require the reforming hand of a Peter the Great: such a one may happen to come in some millions of years; for every thing is too late in coming.

PIECES relating to the HISTORY of
CHARLES XII. King of SWEDEN.

LETTER to Mareſchal SCHULLEMBURG, Ge-
neral of the VENETIANS *.

S I R,

I Received, by a courier of the French ambaf-
ſador, the journal of your campaign in 1703
and 1704, with which your excellency has
been pleaſed to honour me. Allow me, Sir, to
apply to you what an ancient writer ſaid of Cæ-
ſar; *Eodem animo ſcripſit quo bellavit*. You muſt
expect, Sir, that ſo great a favour will make me
extremely ſelfiſh, and will expoſe you to freſh re-
queſts. I beg you would communicate to me
whatever can give me any light into the particu-
lars of the war of Charles XII. I have the honour
to ſend you a journal of that king's campaigns;
a king worthy of having fought with you. This
journal reaches to the battle of Pultowa incluſive.
It is the work of a Swediſh officer, called Mr.
Alderfeld, who appears to be extremely well in-
formed, and as accurate as it is poſſible to be on
a ſubject of this nature. It is not a hiſtory; far
from it; but it contains excellent materials for
the compoſition of a hiſtory; and I flatter myſelf
I ſhall be able to correct mine in many particulars
by the memoirs of this officer.

* Dated at the Hague, Sept. 15, 1740.

Besides, Sir, I must own to you, it was with particular pleasure I found in these memoirs a variety of circumstances that tally exactly with the informations from which I compiled my history. I, who doubt of every thing, and especially of anecdotes, began to condemn myself touching a number of facts which I had advanced. For instance, I could no longer believe that Mr. de Guiscard, the French ambassador, was on board the ship of Charles XII. in the expedition to Copenhagen. I began to repent of having said, that the cardinal primate, who had so great a hand in dethroning king Augustus, secretly opposed the election of king Stanislaus. I was almost ashamed of having affirmed that the duke of Marlborough, when he went to have a conference with Charles XII. addressed himself to baron de Gorts before he saw count Piper. Mr. de la Motraye had censured me for all these facts, with a confidence which, I imagined, could proceed from nothing but better information; notwithstanding which, they are all confirmed by the memoirs of Mr. Alderfeld.

In these memoirs I find that the king of Sweden, agreeable to what I had said, sometimes eat with king Augustus, whom he had dethroned, and that he always gave him the right hand. In them I find, that the kings Augustus and Stanislaus met at the court of the latter, and saluted each other without exchanging a word: there, likewise, mention is made of the extraordinary visit which Charles paid to Augustus at Dresden, upon leaving his dominions. There, even, the witticism of baron Stralheim is quoted word for word, in the same manner as I have related it.

In the preface to Mr. Alderfeld's book, the editor talks in the following strain :

“ With regard to Mr. de la Motraye, who hath officiously taken upon him to criticize Mr. de Voltaire, the perusal of these memoirs will only serve to confound him, and make him sensible of his own errors, which are much more numerous than those he imputes to his adversary.”

True it is, Sir, and I plainly perceive it by this journal, I have been mistaken with regard to the minute circumstances of several military transactions. I have, indeed, ascertained the exact number of the Swedish and Muscovite troops at the famous battle of Narva ; but on many other occasions I have fallen into mistakes. Time, you know, is the parent of truth ; which, after all, I am afraid we have but little reason to hope that ever we shall be able fully to discover. You will see, Sir, that Mr. Alderfeld does not agree with you concerning some points relating to your admirable passage over the Oder ; but I will believe the German general, who must necessarily have known all the particulars of this passage, much rather than the Swedish officer, who could not possibly know any more than a few of them.

By the memoirs of your excellency, and by those of this officer, I intend to correct my history. I likewise expect an extract of a history of Charles XII. written in Swedish by Mr. Norberg, chaplain to that monarch.

Indeed, I am much afraid that the chaplain has sometimes viewed matters with other eyes than the ministers, who have furnished me with materials. I shall esteem him, to be sure, for his zeal in defending the honour of his master : but I, who never was chaplain to the king, nor to the
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czar ; I, whose sole ambition is to speak the truth, will always acknowledge, that the inflexible obstinacy of Charles XII. at Bender, his resolution of lying six months in bed, and many of his measures after the unhappy battle of Pultowa, appear to me more extraordinary than heroic.

If there is any possibility of rendering history useful, it is only, in my opinion, by pointing out the good and ill which kings have done to mankind. I think, for instance, that if Charles XII. after having subdued Denmark, beat the Russians, deposed his enemy Augustus, and established the new king on the throne of Poland, had granted peace to the czar, who begged it of him ; had he returned home the conqueror and peace-maker of the North, and employed his attention in encouraging the arts and commerce in his country, he would then indeed have been truly a great man, instead of being but a great warrior, vanquished at last by a prince whom he despised. It were to be wished, for the happiness of the world, that Peter the Great had been sometimes less cruel, and Charles XII. less wedded to his own opinion.

I greatly prefer to both these sovereigns, a prince who regards humanity as the chief virtue, who never has recourse to war but through absolute necessity, who loves peace because he loves mankind, who encourages all the arts, and who, in one word, though a king, endeavours to act like a philosopher. Such, Sir, is my hero ; nor think that it is only a creature of the imagination. This hero actually exists in the person of a young king, whose fame will soon reach even to your parts ; you will then see whether or not I am deceived : he deserves such generals as you. To write the
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history of such kings is a pleasing task ; for then we write the history of human happiness.

But if you carefully examine this journal of Mr. Alderfeld, you will find in it little else, but that, on Monday the third of April, there were so many thousand men butchered in such a field: that, on Tuesday, whole villages were reduced to ashes, and the women, clasping their little babes in their arms, were consumed with them in the same flames: that, on Thursday, a thousand bombs levelled the houses of a free and innocent city with the ground, for not having paid immediately a hundred thousand crowns to a foreign conqueror who happened to pass by its walls: and that, on Friday, fifteen or sixteen hundred prisoners perished with cold and hunger. These, or such as these, are the materials which compose the subject of his four volumes.

Have you not frequently thought, M. Mareschal, that your illustrious trade is more shocking than necessary? I see Mr. Alderfeld sometimes disguises cruelties, which ought, in effect, to be forgotten, in order to prevent their ever becoming the object of imitation. For example, I have been credibly informed, that, at the battle of Frauenstad, marshal Renschild caused twelve or fifteen hundred Muscovites to be put to death in cold blood, six hours after the action, tho' they begged their lives on their knees. He alledges there were only six hundred, and that they were put to death immediately after the battle. This is a circumstance, Sir, of which you cannot be ignorant: you made the admirable disposition of the Swedish troops even in this unhappy engagement; be so good, then, as to tell me the truth,
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for which I have as great a regard as I have for your glory.

I expect, with extreme impatience, the other instructions with which you shall be pleased to honour me. Allow me to ask your opinion of the march of Charles XII. into the Ukraine, of his retreat into Turkey, and of the death of Patkul : you can easily dictate many things to a secretary, which will serve to throw light upon several truths ; a favour for which the public will acknowledge themselves greatly obliged to you. You are bound in duty, Sir, to communicate knowledge to mankind, in return for the admiration which they so justly entertain of your merit. I am, with the greatest respect and esteem, and with the most sincere wishes for the preservation of a life, of which you have frequently been so prodigal,

Sir, your Excellency's most humble
and most obedient Servant, V.

P. S. Just as I had finished my letter, I was informed, that a French translation of the history of Charles XII. written in Swedish by Mr. Norberg, has been printed at the Hague. This will be a new pallet *, in which I shall dip the pencils with which I must retouch my picture.

* This pallet could not answer the purpose. It is well known that the history of Charles XII. by Mr. Norberg, is no more, to the year 1709, than a confused collection of facts ill related ; and from 1709, than a copy of the history composed by Mr. de Voltaire.

LETTER to Mr. NORBERG, Chaplain to
CHARLES XII. king of SWEDEN, and Author
of a history of that Monarch.

PERMIT me, Sir, after having taken the trouble to read that part of your history of Charles XII. which is already published, to address to you some just complaints, both with regard to your manner of treating that history, and the freedom which, in your preface, you presume to use with those who have treated it before you.

I love the truth; but the old proverb, "All truths ought not to be told," relates chiefly to insignificant truths. Be pleased to recollect that passage in the preface to the history of Mr. de Voltaire. "The history of a prince, says he, is not all that he ever did, but only what he did worthy of being transmitted to posterity."

There are some readers, perhaps, who will be glad to see the catechism which Charles XII. was taught, and will take great pleasure * in being informed, that in 1693, doctor Peter Rudbekius conferred the degree of doctor upon the masters of arts Aquinus, Samuel Virenius, Ennegius, Herlandus, Stukius, and upon other personages, extremely respectable, no doubt, but who had very little concern in the battles, the triumphs, and defeats of your hero.

Perhaps it is a matter of great importance to Europe, to know that the chapel of the castle of Stockholm, which was burnt about fifty years

* History of Charles XII, by Norberg, page 9. Hufson's edition.

ago, stood in the new aisle, on the north side; and that there were in it two pictures of the intendant Kloker, which are now in the church of St. Nicholas; that the seats were covered with blue on days of public service; that some of them were of oak, and others of walnut-tree*; and that, instead of large lustres, there were small flat candlesticks, which did not fail to produce a very happy effect; that there were there to be seen four figures of plaister of Paris, and that the pavement was black and white.

We will further believe*, that it is a thing of great consequence to be well informed, that there was no base gold in the canopy which served at the coronation of Charles XII. to know what were the dimensions of it; whether the church was hung with red or blue cloth; and what was the height of the benches. All this may have its weight with those who want to acquire a thorough knowledge of every the most minute concern of princes.

After the tedious detail of these mighty matters, you tell us at what hour Charles XII. was crowned; but you do not tell us why he was crowned before the age prescribed by law; why the queen-mother was deprived of the regency; how the famous Piper gained the confidence of the king; what was the strength of Sweden at that time, what the number of its people, who were its allies, and what its government, its wants, and resources.

You have given us a part of the military journal of Mr. Alderfeld; but a journal, Sir, is no more a history than materials are a house. Allow me to tell

* Page 21.

† Page 31, 32.

you, a history does not consist in particularizing petty facts, in producing manifestos, replies, and rejoinders. This is not the manner in which Quintus Curtius composed the history of Alexander, or in which Livy and Tacitus wrote the Roman history. There are a thousand journalists; but hardly have we two or three modern historians. We could wish that those who prepare the colours would give them to some painter in order to form a picture.

You cannot be ignorant, Sir, that Mr. de Voltaire had published this declaration which your translator repeats.

“* I love the truth and have no other aim nor interest than to know it. Those passages in my history of Charles XII. in which I shall find myself to have been mistaken, shall be altered. It is natural to think that Mr. Norberg, a Swede, and an eye-witness, should be better informed than me, who am a stranger. I shall correct my history by his memoirs, and will do it with pleasure.”

You see, Sir, with what politeness Mr. de Voltaire mentioned your name, and with what deference he expected your performance, though he had received memoirs for the compilation of his own from the hands of several ambassadors, with whom it would appear you had little connection, and even from the hands of more than one sovereign.

To this French politeness, Sir, you reply in a manner that favours something of a Gothic taste.

* Hufson's edition, 4to. page 13.

You say, in your preface*, that the history published by Mr. de Voltaire is not worth the pains of translating; though, in fact, it hath been translated into almost all the European languages, and hath undergone eight editions at London, in an English dress. You there add very politely, that a Puffendorf would have treated him as he did Varillas, as an arch liar.

In order to prove this charitable supposition, you take care to mark on the margin of your book all the capital errors into which he has fallen.

You particularly observe, that major-general Stuart did not receive a slight wound in the shoulder, as the French author, after a German writer, rashly affirms, but only a pretty severe contusion. You cannot deny that Mr. de Voltaire has faithfully related the battle of Narva, which in his book at least forms an interesting description. You must certainly know, that he is the only writer who has dared to affirm that Charles XII. fought the battle of Narva with no more than eight thousand men. All the other historians give him twenty thousand: they say what is probable; but Mr. de Voltaire is the first that has told the truth in this important article. Nevertheless, you call him an arch liar, because he said that a suit of red laced cloaths was brought to general Liewen, at the siege of Thorn; and you magnify this enormous error, by positively asserting that the lace was not upon a red ground.

But what name will suit you, Sir, you who so lavishly bestow, about matters of such mighty con-

* Page 13.

sequence, the genteel appellation of arch liar, not only upon a man who is extremely fond of the truth, but likewise upon all the other historians who have writ the history of Charles XII. what name, Sir, will suit you, after the copy you give of the grand signor's letter to that monarch? Here follows the beginning of the letter.

“We * Sultan Basha, to king Charles XII. by the grace of God king of Sweden and of the Goths, health, &c.”

How could you, Sir, who have been among the Turks, and who seem to have learned from them not to be very nice in the choice of your words, how could you be ignorant of their stile? What Turkish emperor ever designed himself “Sultan Basha?” What letter of the divan ever began in this manner? What prince ever wrote that he would send plenipotentiaries, the first opportunity, in order to learn the particulars of a battle? what letter of the grand signor ever concluded with this expression, “To the protection of God?” In fine, when did you ever see an express from Constantinople dated in the year of the creation, and not in that of the Hegira? The iman of the august sultan, who shall write the history of that great emperor and his sublime viziers, may well give you many opprobrious appellations, if the Turkish politeness admits of such rusticity.

Does it then become you, Sir, after the production of such a piece as this, which would offend that same Mr. Baron Puffendorf, to exclaim against a lie about a red coat?

Besides, are you a zealous advocate for the truth, when you conceal the cruelties exercised by the chamber of liquidations under Charles XI. when, in speaking of Patkul, you pretend to forget that he defended the rights of the Livonians, who had committed them to his charge; of those same Livonians who now live happily under the mild government of the illustrious Semiramis of the North? This, Sir, is not barely to betray the truth; it is to betray the cause of mankind; it is to fail in your duty to your illustrious country, which is an enemy to oppression.

Cease then in your compilation, to bestow your Vandalic and Gothic epithets upon those who write history: cease to assume to yourself a right of employing that same barbarous pedantry which you impute to Puffendorf.

Do you know, Sir, that Puffendorf is an author sometimes as incorrect as he is fashionable? do you know that he is read, because he is only one of the kind that was tolerable in his time? do you know that those whom you call arch liars, would blush if they did not understand the history of the world better than your Puffendorf? do you know that Mr. de la Martiniere corrected more than a thousand errors in the last edition of that book?

Let us open this book at a venture, which is so universally known. I light upon the article of the popes. He says, in speaking of Julius II. "That he left behind him, as well as Alexander " VI. a bad name." Nevertheless the Italians revere the memory of Julius II. They consider him as a great man, who, after having presided in four conclaves, and commanded armies, pursued, even to his grave, the glorious scheme he had formed of chasing the barbarians from Italy. He

was

was a lover of the arts; he laid the foundation of that church, which is the wonder of the universe; he encouraged painting, sculpture, and architecture, and, at the same time, he rekindled the extinguished valour of the Romans. The Italians despise, and with good reason too, the ridiculous manner in which the greatest part of foreigners write the history of the popes. We ought to be capable to distinguish the pontiff from the sovereign: we ought to be capable, though born at Stockholm, to entertain a high opinion of the popes: we ought to remember the saying of the great count de Medicis, viz. "That kingdoms are not governed with pater-nosters." In a word, a historian should be a man of no country, and of no party.

If we again open baron Puffendorf's book, we shall find it asserted, in the article of Mary queen of England, daughter of Henry VIII. "That she could not be recognized as his legitimate daughter without the authority of the pope." What a croud of errors in these few words! she had been recognized by the parliament: and besides, what need had she of the assistance of Rome, in order to confirm her legitimation, since it never had been either the interest or the intention of the Romish church to annul the marriage of her mother?

In reading the article of Charles V. I find that, before the year 1516, Charles had always in his eye his famous maxim, *ne plus ultra*: but he was then but fifteen years of age; and that motto was not composed till a long time after.

Shall we, on account of these errors, pronounce Puffendorf to be an arch liar? no: we will rather acknowledge that, in such an extensive work, a few mistakes are excusable; and we would entreat you,

you, Sir, to be more accurate than he is ; more thoroughly acquainted than you yet seem to be with the stile of the Turks, more polite with the French ; in a word, to be more just and judicious in the choice of the facts you relate.

Among the many advantages with which the art of printing hath been attended, this is one inconvenience, that crouds of scandalous pamphlets are published, to the disgrace of genius and of good manners. Wherever there are many writers there are many libels : these wretched performances, frequently produced in France, pass current in the North, in the same manner as our bad wines are sold there for Burgundy and Champagne. The former are read, and the latter are drank, often with the same want of taste ; but men of real knowledge will always despise what France rejects.

You quote, Sir, some pieces which are altogether unworthy the notice of the chaplain of Charles XII. Your translator, Mr. Walmoth, hath honestly informed us, in his notes, that some of these are such wretched and obscure satires, that any gentleman would be ashamed to cite them.

The duties of an historian are many and various. Allow me to remind you of two of them, which are of some consequence ; these are, never to rail, and never to be tedious. For the first I can easily excuse you, because your book will be the less read ; but for the last I cannot possibly forgive you, because I have been obliged to read it. In other respects, Sir, I am with all possible regard, your most humble, and most obedient servant.

THE

The SCEPTICISM of HISTORY.

INcredulity, let us remember, according to Aristotle, is the foundation of all knowledge. This maxim ought to be attended to by all those who read history, and especially ancient history. What an infinite number of absurd facts ! what a confused heap of incoherent fables that shock the common sense of mankind ! of these do not believe a single syllable. There were kings, consuls, and decemvirs at Rome ; the Romans destroyed Carthage ; Cæsar vanquished Pompey ; all this is true. But when you are told that Castor and Pollux fought for that people ; that a vestal set a loaded ship afloat by the touch of her girdle ; that a gulph was shut up by Curtius throwing himself into it ; do not believe one word of it. You every where read of prodigies, of predictions accomplished, of miraculous cures performed in the temple of Æsculapius ; do not believe a word of them. But a hundred witnesses have signed the verbal process of these miracles engraved on tables of brass ; and the temples were filled with votaries who attested these cures. That there have been knaves and fools who have attested what they never saw ; that there have been devotees who have made presents to the priests of Esculapius when their children have been cured of a rheumatism ; this you may believe : but with regard to the miracles of Esculapius, do not believe a word of them.

But the Egyptian priests were all forcerers, and Herodotus admires their profound skill in witchcraft : do not believe one word of what Herodotus tells you.

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With

With me every thing that is prodigious is incredible. But ought I to extend my incredulity to those matters, which, though within the ordinary course of human affairs, are nevertheless destitute of moral probability?

For instance, Plutarch assures us that Cæsar, completely armed, threw himself into the sea of Alexandria, holding some papers which he was unwilling to wet, in one hand, and swimming with the other.

Do not believe a word of this story which Plutarch tells you. Rather believe Cæsar himself, who does not speak a word of it in his Commentaries; and be assured that when a man throws himself into the sea with some papers in his hand, he must necessarily wet them*.

You will find in Quintus Curtius, that Alexander and his generals were surprised when they beheld the ebbing and flowing of the sea, a thing which to them was equally new and unexpected; do not believe a word of it.

It is probable enough that Alexander killed Clitus in a fit of drunkenness, and that he loved Ephestion as Socrates loved Alcibiades; but it is extremely improbable that the disciple of Aristotle should be ignorant of the ebbing and flowing of the sea. There were philosophers in his army; it was sufficient to have been on the Eu-

* This, we apprehend, is meer cavilling. If the Commentaries were written on rolls of the papyrus, one dip in the sea, at the first plunge, would do very little damage to the writing: but if the contents were written with a stylus on wax tablets, according to the custom of the Romans, the water would have no effect at all; and in that case, Cæsar must have held up his arm, that the tablets might not oppose or retard his motion in swimming.

phrates, at the mouth of which there were tides, in order to be acquainted with this phenomenon*. Alexander had travelled into Africa, the coasts of which are washed by the ocean. Is it possible that his admiral Nearchus could be ignorant of that which was known to every boy on the banks of the river Indus? Such stupid improbabilities, repeated in so many authors, have too much discredited the veracity of historians.

Father Maimbourg relates, after a hundred others, that two Jews promised the empire to Leo the Isaurian, provided [that when he should be emperor, he would destroy images. What interest, pray, had these two Jews in hindering the Christians from having paintings? how could these two wretched creatures promise the empire? is it not offering an insult to the understanding of the reader, to entertain him with such fables as these?

It must be confessed, that Mezerai, in his stiff, low, and unequal stile, intermixes with the ill-digested facts which he relates, many absurdities of the same nature. At one time it is Henry V. of England, who was crowned king of France at Paris, who died of the hemorrhoids for having presumed, says he, to seat himself on the throne of our kings: at another, it is St. Michael who appeared to Joan of Arc.

* Whether or not Nearchus was acquainted with the flux and reflux of the sea, which by the bye, he could not have learned in the seas of Italy and Greece; he might have been astonished at the great extent of the shore that was left dry by the ebb of the ocean, in such a remote country as the East Indies.

I do not believe even eye-witnesses, when they report things inconsistent with common sense. The *sieur de Joinville*, or rather he who has translated his Gaulic history into ancient French, may assure me, if they will, that the emirs of Egypt, after having assassinated their sultan, offered the crown to St. Lewis, their prisoner: they might as well tell me that we had offered the crown of France to a Turk. What likelihood that the Mahometans should ever think of chusing for their sovereign a man whom they could regard in no other light than as a leader of barbarians, whom they had taken in battle, who neither understood their laws nor their language, and who was the capital enemy of their religion?

I give no more credit to the *sieur de Joinville*, when he tells me this tale, than when he informs me that the Nile overflowed at St. Remy, in the beginning of October. I will likewise venture to call in question the story of the old man of the mountain, who, upon the report of a crusade undertaken by St. Lewis, dispatched two assassins to kill him at Paris; and, upon a fresh report of his extraordinary virtue, sent off next day two couriers to countermand his first orders. This account hath too much the air of an Arabian fable.

I will boldly tell Mezerai, father Daniel, and all the historians, that I do not believe a storm of rain and hail made Edward III. return to his right senses, and procured peace to Philip de Valois. Conquerors are not so devote, nor do they make peace on account of rain*.

No-

* The greatest minds are often actuated by the most capricious motives. If we suppose that the soul of Edward III. was influenced either by the terrors of superstition,

Nothing, to be sure, is more probable than crimes; yet ought they at least to be well attested. Mezerai makes mention of more than sixty princes who have been poisoned; but this he affirms without any proof; and a common report should be given as no better than a common report.

I will not even believe Titus Livius, when he tells me that the physician of Pyrrhus offered to poison his master, provided the Romans would pay him a certain sum of money. Hardly at that time had the Romans any money at all; and

sition, or the sentiments of humanity, we shall see no reason to withhold our credit from this incident, which is recorded by all the historians. In the year 1360, Edward having invaded France, and filled that country with horror and devastation, while he was advancing at the head of his army, within two leagues of Chartres, he was overtaken by a terrible tempest, which he considered as a dreadful visitation from heaven. The peals of thunder and flashes of lightning, intermingled with deluges of rain, smote the hearts of his best warriors with dismay: but, what made the strongest impression upon Edward's own mind, was the havock occasioned by a terrible shower of hail, which in a moment laid a thousand of his best troops, and six times that number of horses, dead upon the spot. Deeply affected by the scene, he threw himself from his horse, upon the ground, and stretching his hands towards the church at Chartres, solemnly vowed to God, that he would seriously incline his mind to peace, if it could be obtained on equitable terms. Now we should be glad to know what circumstance of this transaction is incredible, or even improbable? We would ask Mr. de Voltaire, whether he would not have had much more reason to doubt the abdication of Charles V. if the truth of the fact was to be determined by its credibility. We may once for all observe, that nothing can be more absurd than the attempt to deduce from general canons, the motives of particular actions, which depend upon such a variety of weakness, peculiarity, and caprice.

Pyrrhus had wherewithal to purchase the republic, had it been exposed to sale. The place of first physician to Pyrrhus was probably more lucrative than that of consul. I will not believe such a story as this, until I find it indisputably proved, that a first physician of one of our kings engaged to poison his patient, upon receiving a reward from a Swiss canton.

Let us likewise suspect whatever appears to be exaggerated. An innumerable army of Persians checked, at the Straits of Thermopylæ, by three hundred Spartans, does not stagger my faith; the situation of the ground renders the adventure probable. Charles XII. with eight thousand hardy veterans, defeated at Narva about eighty thousand half armed Russians; I admire, I believe the action. But when I read, that Simon de Montfort, with nine hundred soldiers*, divided into three bodies, beat a hundred thousand men, I then repeat, "That I do not believe a word of it." I am told indeed that it was a miracle; but is it so very certain that God performed a miracle in favour of Simon de Montfort?

I would call in question the battle of Charles XII. at Bender, were it not sufficiently attested by many eye-witnesses, and did not the character of that prince render such a romantic instance of heroism extremely probable. That scepticism

* Such exploits as these were often achieved by Europeans, both in the East and West Indies: nor are they at all surprising, if we consider that the few were trained up to arms and discipline, and their antagonists a rude multitude without order and regulation, unarmed, unsupplied with necessaries, unprovided with subordinate command, rash, obstinate, fanatic, and encumbered even by the greatness of their own number.

which

which we ought to entertain with regard to particular facts, we should likewise extend to the manners of foreign nations ; let us refuse our belief to every historian, ancient and modern, who relates things contrary to nature, and to the general character of the human mind.

All the first accounts of America talk of nothing but anthropophagi, or man-eaters; and to read them, one would imagine that the Americans eat human flesh as commonly as we eat mutton. The truth, when fully known, amounts only to this, that a small number of Persians were eat by their conquerors, instead of being eat by the worms*.

The new Puffendorf, as incorrect as the old one, says, that in 1589, an Englishman and four women, having escaped from a shipwreck which they had suffered in a voyage to Madagascar, landed on a desert island; and that the Englishman laboured with so much success, that in 1667, there were found on this island, which was called Pines, no less than twelve thousand handsome English protestants.

The ancients, and their numerous credulous compilers among the moderns, are perpetually telling us, that at Babylon, the best regulated city in the universe, all the maids and married women prostituted themselves once a year in the temple of Venus. I can easily believe, that in

* If we may believe the most creditable historians who have written of America and Africa, the Caribbee Indians feasted on human flesh, and were even so dainty in this particular, that the prisoners destined for the market were fattened and even castrated, to render them the more plump and delicious. All the caciques in South America, and Motezuma in particular, had dishes of human flesh served every day at their tables; and in the kingdom of Congo in Africa, human flesh used to be sold publicly in shambles.

Babylon, as in other places, a man might have a little pleasure for his money; but I can never allow myself to think, that in a city, the best governed of any that were then in the world, all the fathers and husbands sent their daughters and wives to a market of public prostitution, and that this decent traffic * was carried on by the express orders of the legislature. We every day see published a hundred stupid stories of the same kind, concerning the customs of the Orientals; and where we have one traveller like Chardin, we have many thousands like Paul Lucas.

Such, however, is not the history of Charles XII. On the contrary, I can assure the reader, that if ever history deserved credit, this in a particular manner is intitled to that distinction. I composed it, as is well known, from the memoirs of Mr. Fabricius, of the Messrs. de Villelongue, and de Fierville, and from the accounts of several eye-witnesses. But as these witnesses did not see every thing, and sometimes saw things in a false light, I have been led, by their means, into more than one error; not indeed concerning the essential facts, but only with regard to some private anecdotes, which, however indifferent in themselves, serve as matter of triumph to the little critics.

I afterwards corrected this history by the military journal of Mr. Alderfeld, which is very accurate, and which assisted me greatly in rectifying some facts and dates.

* Is there any thing more surprising in this circumstance, than in the practice of the Romans, (another polite people,) who lent their wives to one another occasionally? is this prostitution more repugnant to the laws of decorum, than were the mysteries of the Bona Dea, or the orges of the Bacchanalians among the Greeks, who were undoubtedly the most civilized nation in the known world?

I likewise perused the history written by Mr. Norberg, chaplain and confessor of Charles XII. This is a work very ill digested, and very ill wrote; it is crowded with a variety of trifling incidents foreign to the subject; and even the grand events are rendered trifling, by the insipid manner of relating them. It is a collection of such rescripts, declarations, and manifestos, as are usually published in the name of kings, when they are at war. These neither serve to point out the causes of events, nor to give us more distinct ideas of military and political transactions; and besides, they are intolerably irksome to the reader. A writer can, at best, but consult them occasionally, in order to derive from them a little information; in the same manner as an architect makes use of rubbish in raising an edifice.

Among the public pieces, with which Norberg hath interlarded his wretched history, there are some which are even false and absurd; such as the letter of Achmet, the Turkish emperor, whom this historian calls sultan basha, by the grace of God*.

This same Norberg makes the king of Sweden say what that monarch never did, nor ever could say, in the affair of Stanislaus. He pretends that Charles XII. told the primate, by way of answer to his objections, that Stanislaus had gained a great many friends in his journey to Italy. Certain, however, it is, that Stanislaus never was in Italy, as that monarch hath himself assured me. After all, what matters it, whether a Pole, in the sixteenth century, travelled into Italy or not for his amusement? What an infinite number of useless facts ought to be retrenched from history!

* See Mr. de Voltaire's letter to Mr. Norberg.

and how do I felicitate myself in having abridged the history of Charles XII!

Norberg had neither judgment nor genius, nor a sufficient knowledge of the world; and it was for that reason, perhaps, that Charles XII. thought proper to chuse him for his confessor. Whether he made that prince a good Christian or not, I will not take upon me to determine, but most undoubtedly he has not made him a hero; and the memory of Charles XII. would be buried in oblivion, were it not transmitted to posterity by abler historians than Mr. Norberg.

It may not here be improper to inform the reader, that there appeared, some years ago, a small pamphlet, entitled, "Historical and Critical Remarks on the History of Charles XII. by Mr. de Voltaire." This little performance was composed from some anecdotes of count Poniatowski. These contained his answers to some fresh questions which I had proposed to him in his last journey to Paris. But his secretary having taken a double copy of them, they fell into the hands of a Dutch bookseller, who did not fail to publish them; and the corrector of the press gave them the title of "Critical," in order to procure them a better sale. This is one of those petty larcenies, which are sometimes practised in the bookselling trade.

La Motraye, a domestic of Mr. Fabricius, has likewise published some remarks on this history. Among the errors and trifles with which this critique of la Motraye is filled, there are some things that are true and useful, and of these I have taken care to avail myself in the latter editions of my history, especially in that of 1739. An historian should neglect nothing: he ought, if possible, to consult both kings and valets de chambre.

A Dis-

A DISCOURSE ON THE HISTORY OF CHARLES XII.
Prefixed to the first Edition.

FEW are the princes whose lives merit a particular history. In vain have most of them been the objects of slander, or of flattery. Small is the number of those whose memory is preserved; and that number would be still more inconsiderable, were none but the good remembered.

The princes who have the best claim to immortality are such as have benefited mankind. Thus, while France endures, the affection of Lewis XII for his people will ever be had in grateful remembrance. The great failings of Francis I. will be excused, for the sake of the arts and sciences of which he was the father. Blessed will be the memory of Henry IV. who conquered his kingdom as much by his clemency as by his valour. And the munificence of Lewis XIV. in protecting the arts which owed their birth to Francis I. will be ever extolled.

It is for a very different reason, that the memory of bad princes is preserved; like fires, plagues, and inundations, they are remembered only for the mischief they have done.

Conquerors hold a middle rank between good kings and tyrants, but are most akin to the latter. As they have a glaring reputation, we are desirous of knowing the most minute circumstances of their lives; for such is the weakness of mankind, that they admire those who have rendered themselves remarkable for wickedness, and talk with greater pleasure of the destroyer than of the founder of an empire.

As for those princes who have neither distinguished themselves in peace nor in war; who have neither been remarkable for great virtues nor great vices; their lives furnish so little matter, either for imitation or instruction, that they are not worthy of being committed to writing. Of so many emperors of Rome, Greece, Germany, and Muscovy; of so many sultans, caliphs, popes, and kings; how few are there, whose names deserve to be recorded any where but in chronological tables, where they only serve to mark the different epochas.

There is a vulgar among princes, as well as among the rest of mankind; yet such is the itch of writing, that no sooner is a prince dead, than the world is filled with volumes under the title of memoirs and histories of his life, and anecdotes of his court. By these means books have been multiplied in such a manner, that were a man to live an hundred years, and to employ them all in reading, he would not have time to run over what hath been published relating to the history of Europe alone, for the two last centuries.

This eager and unreasonable desire of transmitting useless stories to posterity, and of fixing the attention of future ages upon common events, proceeds from a weakness extremely incident to those who have lived in courts, and have unhappily been engaged in the management of public affairs. They consider the court in which they have lived as the most magnificent in the world; their king as the greatest monarch; and the affairs in which they have been concerned as the most important that ever were transacted: and they vainly imagine, that posterity will view them in the same light.

If a prince undertakes a war, or his court is embroiled in cabals and intrigues; if he buys the friendship of one of his neighbours, or sells his own to another; if, after some victories and defeats, he at last makes peace with his enemies; his subjects are so warm and interested by the part which they themselves have acted in these scenes, that they regard their own age as the most glorious that hath existed since the creation. But what is the consequence? Why, this prince dies; new measures are adopted; the intrigues of his court, his mistresses, his ministers, his generals, his wars, and even himself, is forgotten.

Ever since the time that Christian princes have been endeavouring to cheat one another, and have alternately been making war and peace, they have signed an immense number of treaties, and fought as many battles; they have performed many glorious, and many infamous actions. Nevertheless, should all this heap of transactions be transmitted to posterity, they would most of them destroy and annihilate each other; and the memory of those only would remain which have produced great revolutions, or which, being related by able writers, are preserved from oblivion, like the pictures of obscure persons, drawn by a masterly hand.

Sensible then, as we are, of the truth of these observations, we should not have added a particular history of Charles XII. king of Sweden, to the infinite number of books with which the world is already crowded, were it not that he and his rival, Peter Alexiowitz, by far the greater man of the two, are universally allowed to be the most illustrious persons that have appeared for upwards of
twenty

twenty centuries. The trifling pleasure, however, of relating extraordinary events was not our only motive for engaging in this work; we flattered ourselves that it might be of some little use to princes, should it ever happen to fall into their hands. No king, surely, can be so incorrigible as, when he reads the history of Charles XII. not to be cured of the vain ambition of making conquests. Where is the prince that can say, I have more courage, more virtues, more resolution, greater strength of body, greater skill in war, or better troops, than Charles XII? And yet, if, with all these advantages, and after so many victories, Charles was so unfortunate, what fate may other princes expect, who, with less capacity and fewer resources, shall entertain the same ambitious views?

This history is composed from the relations of some persons of distinction, who lived several years with Charles XII. and with Peter the Great, emperor of Muscovy; and who having retired, long after the death of these princes, into a country of liberty, can have no interest in concealing the truth. Mr. Fabricius, who lived in the most intimate familiarity with Charles XII. Mr. de Fierville, the French ambassador; Mr. de Villelongue, a colonel in the Swedish service, and even Mr. Poniatowski, have all of them contributed their share in furnishing me with materials.

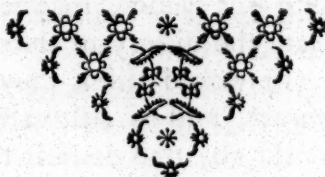
In this work we have not ventured to advance a single fact, without consulting eye-witnesses of undoubted veracity; a circumstance that renders this history very different from those gazettes, which have already been published under the title of lives of Charles XII. If we have omitted some little skirmishes between the Swedish and Muscovite

vite officers, the reason is, that we mean to write the history, not of these officers, but only of the king of Sweden, and even of his life none but the most important events. The history of a prince, in our opinion, is not to relate every thing he did, but only what he did worthy of being transmitted to posterity.

Here it may not be improper to remark, that many things, which were true at the time of writing this history in 1728, are not so at present. Commerce, for instance, begins to be more encouraged in Sweden. The Polish infantry are better disciplined, and are provided with regimental clothes, a convenience which they then wanted. In reading history, one ought always to remember the time in which the author wrote. To peruse the memoirs of cardinal de Retz, one would take the French for a set of enthusiasts, breathing nothing but faction, madness, and civil discord. To read the history of the happy years of Lewis XIV. one would think they were born to obey, to conquer, and to cultivate the polite arts. And, should any one consult the memoirs of the first years of Lewis XV. he will find them devoted to luxury and avarice, and too regardless of every thing else. The Spaniards at present are not the Spaniards of Charles V. and yet they may be so in a few years. The English of this age bear no more resemblance to the fanatics in Cromwell's time, than the monks and monsignori, that crowd the streets of Rome, do to the ancient Scipios. I doubt much whether the Swedish troops could be rendered, all of a sudden, so hardy and warlike as were those of Charles XII. We say of a man, that he was brave at such a time;

time ; in like manner we should say in speaking of a nation, they were of this or that character in such a year, and under such a government.

Should any prince or minister meet with disagreeable truths in this book, let them remember, that, as they act in a public station, they ought to give the public an account of their conduct. Such is the price they must pay for their greatness. The business of an historian is to record, not to flatter ; and the only way to oblige mankind to speak well of us, is to contribute all that lies in our power to their happiness and welfare.



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T H E C O N T E N T S .

An Abridgment of the History of SWEDEN, to the Reign of CHARLES XII. The Education of that Prince, and an Account of his Enemies. Character of the Czar PETER ALEXIOWITZ. Curious Anecdotes relative to that Prince and the RUSSIAN Nation. MUSCOVY, POLAND, and DENMARK, unite against CHARLES XII.

SWEDEN and Finland make up a kingdom two hundred leagues broad, and three hundred long. This country reaches from the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, or thereabouts, to the seventieth. It lies under a very severe climate, which is hardly ever softened either by the
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return of spring or of autumn. The winter prevails there nine months in the year. The scorching heats of the summer succeed immediately to the excessive cold of the winter. The frost begins in the month of October, without any of those imperceptible gradations, which in other countries usher in the seasons, and render the alteration more agreeable. Nature, in return, hath given to this cold climate a clear sky and a pure air. The almost constant heat of the summer produces flowers and fruits in a very short time. The long nights of the winter are tempered by the evening and morning twilights, which last for a greater or a less time, in proportion as the sun is nearer to, or farther removed from Sweden; and the light of the moon, unobscured by clouds, and encreased by the reflection of the snow that covers the ground, and frequently by the Aurora Borealis, makes it as convenient to travel in Sweden by night as by day. For want of pasture, the cattle there are smaller than in the more southern parts of Europe; but the men are of a large stature, healthful from the purity of the air, and strong from the severity of the climate; they live to a great age, unless enfeebled by the immoderate use of wines and strong liquors, of which the northern nations seem to be the more fond, the less nature hath indulged them with these commodities.

The Swedes are well made, strong, and active, and capable of enduring the greatest fatigue, want, and hunger. Born with a military genius, and high spirit, they are more brave than industrious, having long neglected, and even at present but little cultivating the arts of commerce, which alone can supply them with those productions in
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which their country is deficient. It was chiefly from Sweden*, they say, (one part of which is still called Gothland) that those swarms of Goths issued forth, who like a deluge over-ran Europe, and wrested it from the Romans, who had usurped the dominion of that vast country, which they continued for the space of five hundred years to harass by their tyranny, and to civilize by their laws.

The northern countries were much more populous at that time than they are at present. Religion, by allowing the men a plurality of wives, gave them an opportunity of furnishing the state with more subjects. The women themselves knew no reproach but that of sterility or idleness; and being as strong and as laborious as the men, they bore children faster and for a longer time. Sweden, however, with that part of Finland which it still retains, does not contain above four millions of inhabitants. The soil is poor and barren; Schonen is the only province that bears wheat. The current coin of the kingdom does not exceed nine millions of livres. The public bank, which is the oldest in Europe, was at first established from mere necessity; the copper and iron, in which their payments were formerly made, being too heavy to be transported.

* If our author had reflected with his usual precision, he would have perceived that a cold, barren country, of the extent of Sweden, could not possibly furnish one hundredth part of those multitudes that deluged all Europe; and a little inquiry would have given him to understand, that the Goths themselves came from Scythia or Tartary, which was called the *Officina Gentium*. It is now generally allowed that the Celtæ, the Goths, the Heruli, Vandals, and Huns, were all originally Tartars.

Sweden preserved its freedom without interruption to the middle of the fourteenth century. During that long period, the form of government was more than once altered; but all these alterations were in favour of liberty. The first magistrate was invested with the name of king, a title which, in different countries, is attended with very different degrees of power. In France and Spain it signifies an absolute monarch: in Poland, Sweden, and England, it means the first man of the republic. This king could do nothing without the senate; and the senate depended upon the states-general, which were frequently assembled. The representatives of the nation, in these grand assemblies, were the gentry, the bishops, and the deputies of the towns; and in process of time, the very peasants, a class of people unjustly despised in other places, and subject to slavery in almost all the northern countries, were admitted to a share in the administration.

About the year 1492, this nation, so jealous of its liberty, and which still piques itself on having conquered Rome about thirteen hundred years ago, was subjected to the yoke by a woman, and by a people less powerful than the Swedes.

Margaret of Valdemar, the Semiramis of the North, and queen of Denmark and Norway, subdued Sweden by force and stratagem, and united these three extensive kingdoms into one mighty monarchy. After her death, Sweden was rent by civil wars; it alternately threw off and submitted to the Danish yoke; was sometimes governed by kings, and sometimes by administrators. About the year 1520, this unhappy kingdom was horribly harrassed by two tyrants: the one was Christian II. king of Denmark, a monster whose

whose character was entirely composed of vices, without the least ingredient of virtue : the other an archbishop of Upsal, and primate of the kingdom, as barbarous as the former. These two, by mutual agreement, caused the consuls and the magistrates of Stockholm, together with ninety-four senators, to be seized in one day, and to be executed by the hand of the common hangman, under the frivolous pretence that they were excommunicated by the pope, for having dared to defend the rights of the state against the encroachments of the archbishop.

While these two men, unanimous in their oppressive measures, and disagreeing only about the division of the spoil, domineered over Sweden with all the tyranny of the most absolute despotism, and all the cruelty of the most implacable revenge, a new and unexpected event gave a sudden turn to the state of affairs in the North.

Gustavus Vasa, a young man, sprung from the ancient kings of Sweden, arose from the forests of Dalecarlia, where he had long lain concealed, and came to deliver his country from bondage. He was one of those great souls whom nature so seldom produces, and who are born with all the qualifications necessary to form the accomplished monarch. His handsome and stately person, and his noble and majestic air, gained him followers at first sight. His eloquence, recommended by an engaging manner, was the more persuasive, the less it was artful. His enterprising genius formed those projects which, though to the vulgar they may appear rash, are considered only as bold in the eyes of great men, and which his courage and perseverance enabled him to accomplish. Brave with circumspection, and mild and gentle in a
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fierce and cruel age, he was as virtuous as it is possible for the leader of a party to be.

Gustavus Vasa had been the hostage of Christian, and had been detained a prisoner contrary to the law of nations. Having found means to escape from prison, he had dressed himself in the habit of a peasant, and in that disguise had wandered about in the mountains and woods of Dalecarlia, where he was reduced to the necessity of working in the copper-mines, at once to procure a livelihood, and to conceal himself from his enemies. Buried, as he was, in these subterraneous caverns, he had the boldness to form the design of dethroning the tyrant. With this view he discovered himself to the peasants, who regarded him as one of those superior beings to whom the common herd of mankind are naturally inclined to submit. These savage boors he soon improved into hardy and warlike soldiers. He attacked Christian and the archbishop, beat them in several encounters, banished them both from Sweden, and, at last, was justly chosen by the states king of that country, of which he had been the deliverer.

Hardly was he established on the throne, when he undertook an enterprize still more difficult than his conquests. The real tyrants of the state were the bishops, who having engrossed into their own hands almost all the riches of Sweden, employed their ill-got wealth in oppressing the subjects, and in making war upon the king. This power was the more formidable, as, in the opinion of the ignorant populace, it was held to be sacred. Gustavus punished the catholic religion for the crimes of its ministers; and, in less than two years, introduced Lutheranism into Sweden, rather by the arts of policy, than by the influence
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of authority. Having thus conquered the kingdom, as himself was wont to say, from the Danes and the clergy, he reigned a happy and an absolute monarch to the age of seventy, and then died full of glory, leaving his family and religion in quiet possession of the throne.

One of his descendants was that Gustavus Adolphus, who is commonly called the great Gustavus. He conquered Ingria, Livonia, Bremen, Verden, Wismar, and Pomerania, not to mention above an hundred places in Germany, which, after his death, were yielded up by the Swedes. He shook the throne of Ferdinand II. and protected the Lutherans in Germany, an attempt in which he was secretly assisted by the pope himself, who dreaded the power of the emperor much more than the prevalence of heresy. He it was that by his victories effectually contributed to humble the house of Austria; though the glory of that enterprise is usually ascribed to cardinal de Richelieu, who well knew how to procure himself the reputation of those great actions, which Gustavus was contented with simply performing. He was just upon the point of extending the war beyond the Danube, and perhaps of dethroning the emperor, when he was killed, in the thirty-seventh year of his age, at the battle of Lutzen, which he gained over Wallstein, carrying along with him to his grave the name of Great, the lamentations of the North, and the esteem of his enemies.

His daughter Christina, a lady of an extraordinary genius, was much fonder of conversing with men of learning, than of reigning over a people, whose knowledge was entirely confined to the art of war. She became as famous for quitting the throne as her ancestors had been for

for obtaining or securing it. The protestants have loaded her memory with many injurious aspersions, as if it were impossible for a person to be possessed of great virtues without adhering to Luther; and the papists have piqued themselves too much on the conversion of a woman who had nothing to recommend her but her taste for philosophy. She retired to Rome, where she passed the rest of her days in the midst of those arts of which she was so passionately fond, and for the sake of which she had renounced a crown at twenty-seven years of age.

Before her abdication, she prevailed upon the states of Sweden to elect her cousin, Charles Gustavus X. son to the count palatine, and duke of Deux-Ponts, as her successor. This prince added new conquests to those of Gustavus Adolphus. He presently carried his arms into Poland, where he gained the famous battle of Warsaw, which lasted for three days. He waged a long and a successful war with the Danes; besieged them in their capital; re-united Schonen to Sweden; and confirmed the duke of Holstein in the possession of Sleswick, at least for a time. At last, having met with a reverse of fortune, and concluded a peace with his enemies, he turned his ambition against his subjects, and formed the design of establishing a despotic government in Sweden. But, like the great Gustavus, he died in the thirty-seventh year of his age, without being able to finish his project, the full accomplishment of which was reserved for his son, Charles XI.

Charles XI. was a warrior, like all his ancestors, and more despotic than any of them. He abolished the authority of the senate, which was declared to be the senate of the king, and

not of the kingdom. He was prudent, vigilant, indefatigable; qualities that must certainly have secured him the love of his subjects, had not his despotic measures been more apt to excite their fear than to gain their affections.

In 1680 he married Ulrica Eleonora, daughter to Frederic III. king of Denmark, a princess eminent for her virtue, and worthy of greater confidence than her husband was pleased to repose in her. Of this marriage, on the 27th of June 1682, was born king Charles XII. the most extraordinary man, perhaps, that ever appeared in the world. In him were united all the great qualities of his ancestors; nor had he any other fault or failing, but that he possessed all these virtues in too high a degree. This is the prince whose history we now purpose to write, and concerning whose person and actions we shall relate nothing but what is vouched by the best authority.

The first book which was put into his hands was Puffendorff's introduction to the history of Europe, that from thence he might acquire an early knowledge of his own dominions, and of those of his neighbours. He next learned the German language, which he continued to speak for the future, with the same fluency as his mother-tongue. At seven years of age he could manage a horse; and the violent exercises in which he delighted, and which discovered his martial disposition, soon procured him a vigorous constitution, capable to support the incredible fatigues which his natural inclination always prompted him to undergo.

Though gentle in his infancy, he betrayed an inflexible obstinacy. The only way to influence him was to awaken his sense of honour; by mention-

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ing the word glory, you might have obtained any thing from him. He had a great aversion to the Latin tongue; but as soon as he heard that the kings of Poland and Denmark understood it, he learned it with great expedition, and retained so much of it, as to be able to speak it all the rest of his life. The same means were employed to engage him to learn the French; but he could never be persuaded to make use of that tongue, not even with the French ambassadors themselves, who understood no other.

As soon as he had acquired a tolerable knowledge of the Latin, his teacher made him translate Quintus Curtius; a book for which he conceived a great liking, rather on account of the subject than the stile. The person who explained this author to him having asked him what he thought of Alexander: "I think (said the prince) I could wish to be like him." "But (resumed the preceptor) he only lived two and thirty years." "Ah! (replied he) and is not that enough, when one has conquered kingdoms?" The courtiers did not fail to carry these answers to the king his father, who would often cry out; "This child will excel me, and will even go beyond the great Gustavus." One day he happened to be diverting himself in the royal apartment, in viewing two plans; the one of a town in Hungary, which the Turks had taken from the emperor; the other of Riga the capital of Livonia, a province conquered by the Swedes about a century before. Under the plan of the town in Hungary were written these words, taken from the book of Job: "The Lord hath given it to me, and the Lord hath taken it from me; blessed be the name of the Lord." The young prince having read this inscription,
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immediately took a pencil, and wrote under the plan of Riga; "The Lord hath given it to me, and the devil shall not take it from me *." Thus, in the most indifferent actions of his childhood, his unconquerable spirit would frequently discover some traces of those heroic qualities which characterize great souls, and which plainly indicated what sort of a man he would one day prove.

He was but eleven years of age when he lost his mother, who expired on the fifth of August 1693. The disease of which she died was supposed to be owing to the bad usage she had received from her husband, and to her own endeavours to conceal her vexation. Charles XI. had, by means of a certain court of justice, which was called the Chamber of Liquidations, and erected by his sole authority, deprived a great number of his subjects of their wealth. Crowds of citizens ruined by this chamber, nobility, merchants, farmers, widows, and orphans, filled the streets of Stockholm, and daily repaired to the gate of the palace to pour forth their unavailing complaints. The queen succoured these unhappy people as much as lay in her power; she gave them her money, her jewels, her furniture, and even her cloaths; and when she had no more to give them, with tears in her eyes she threw herself at her husband's feet, beseeching him to have pity on his wretched subjects. The king gravely answered her, "Madam, we took you to bring us children, not to give us advice." And from that time he treated

* This anecdote I give from the information of two French ambassadors, who resided at the court of Sweden.

her with a severity that is said to have shortened her days.

He died four years after her, on the fifteenth of April 1697, in the forty-second year of his age, and the thirty-seventh of his reign, at a time when the empire, Spain, and Holland, on the one side, and France on the other, had referred the decision of their quarrels to his arbitration, and when he had already concerted the terms of accommodation between these different powers.

He left to his son, who was then fifteen years of age, a throne well established and respected abroad; subjects poor, but valiant and loyal; together with a treasury in good order, and managed by able ministers.

Charles XII. at his accession to the throne, found himself the absolute and undisturbed master, not only of Sweden and Finland, but also of Livonia, Carelia, Ingria, Wismar, Vibourg, the islands of Rugen and Oesel, and the finest part of Pomerania, together with the dutchy of Bremen and Verden, all of them the conquests of his ancestors, secured to the crown by long possession, and by the solemn treaties of Munster and Oliva, and supported by the terror of the Swedish arms. The peace of Ryswick, which was begun under the auspices of the father, being fully concluded under those of the son, he found himself the mediator of Europe, from the first moment of his reign.

The laws of Sweden fix the majority of their kings at the age of fifteen; but Charles XI. who was entirely absolute, put off, by his last-will, the majority of his son to the age of eighteen. In this he favoured the ambitious views of his mother Eduiga-Eleonora of Holstein, dowager of Charles

Charles X. who was appointed by the king her son, guardian to the young king her grandson, and regent of the kingdom, in conjunction with a council of five persons.

The regent had had a share in the management of public affairs during the reign of her son. She was now advanced in years; but her ambition, which was greater than her abilities, prompted her to entertain the pleasing hopes of possessing authority for a long time, under the king her grandson. She kept him at as great a distance as possible from all concern with the affairs of state. The young prince passed his time either in hunting or in reviewing his troops, and would even sometimes exercise with them; which amusement seemed only to be the natural effect of his youthful vivacity. He never betrayed any dissatisfaction sufficient to alarm the regent, who flattered herself that the dissipation of mind occasioned by these diversions would render him incapable of application, and leave her in possession of the supreme power for a considerable time.

One day in the month of November, and in the same year in which his father died, when he had been taking a review of several regiments, and Piper the counsellor was standing by him, he seemed to be absorbed in a profound reverie. "May I take the liberty (said Piper to him) of asking your majesty what you are thinking of so seriously?" "I am thinking (replied the prince) that I am capable of commanding those brave fellows; and I don't chuse that either they or I should receive orders from a woman." Piper immediately seized this opportunity of making his fortune; but conscious that his own interest was not sufficient for the execution of such a danger-

ous enterprize, as the removal of the queen from the regency, and the hastening of the king's majority, he proposed the affair to count Axel Sparre, a man of a daring spirit, and fond of popularity. Him he cajoled with the hopes of being the king's confident. The count readily swallowed the bait, and undertook the management of the whole matter, while all his labours only tended to promote the interest of Piper. The counsellors of the regency were soon drawn into the scheme, and forthwith proceeded to the execution of it, in order to recommend themselves the more effectually to the king.

They went in a body to propose it to the queen, who little expected such a declaration. The counsellors of the regency laid the matter before the states-general, who were then assembled, and who were all unanimous in approving the proposal. The point was carried with a rapidity that nothing could withstand; so that Charles XII. had only to signify his desire of reigning, and, in three days, the states bestowed the government upon him. The queen's power and credit fell in an instant. She afterwards led a private life, which was more suitable to her age, though less agreeable to her humour. The king was crowned on the twenty-fourth of December following. He made his entry into Stockholm on a sorrel horse shod with silver, having a scepter in his hand and a crown upon his head, amidst the acclamations of a whole people, passionately fond of every novelty, and always conceiving great hopes from the reign of a young prince.

The ceremony of the consecration and coronation belongs to the archbishop of Upsal. This is almost the only privilege that remains to him of the
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the great number that were claimed by his predecessors. After having anointed the prince, according to custom, he held the crown in his hand, in order to put it upon his head: Charles snatched it from him and crowned himself, regarding the poor prelate all the while with a stern look. The people, who are always dazzled by every thing that has an air of grandeur and magnificence, applauded this action of the king. Even those who had groaned most severely under the tyranny of the father, were foolish enough to commend the son for this instance of arrogance, which was a sure pledge of their future slavery.

As soon as Charles was master of the kingdom, he made Piper his chief confidant, entrusting him at the same time with the management of public affairs, and giving him all the power of a prime minister, without the odium of the name. A few days after he created him a count, which is a dignity of great eminence in Sweden, and not an empty title that may be assumed without any manner of importance, as with us in France.

The beginning of the king's reign gave no very favourable idea of his character. It was imagined that he had been more ambitious of obtaining the supreme power, than worthy of possessing it. True it is, he had no dangerous passion; but his conduct discovered nothing but the follies of youth, and the freaks of obstinacy. He seemed to be equally proud and lazy. The ambassadors who resided at his court, took him even for a person of mean capacity, and represented him as such to their respective masters*. The Swedes entertained the same opinion of him: nobody knew

* This is confirmed by original letters.

his real character : he did not even know it himself, until the storm that suddenly arose in the North gave him an opportunity of displaying his great talents, which had hitherto lain concealed.

Three powerful princes, taking the advantage of his youth, conspired his ruin almost at the same time. The first was his own cousin, Frederick IV. king of Denmark : the second Augustus, elector of Saxony and king of Poland : Peter the Great, czar of Muscovy, was the third, and the most dangerous. It will be necessary to unfold the origin of these wars, which produced such great events : and to begin with Denmark.

Of the two sisters of Charles XII. the eldest was married to the duke of Holstein, a young prince of an undaunted spirit and of a gentle disposition. The duke, oppressed by the king of Denmark, repaired to Stockholm with his spouse, and throwing himself into the arms of the king, earnestly implored his assistance. This he hoped to obtain, as Charles was not only his brother-in-law, but was likewise the sovereign of a people who bore an irreconcilable hatred to the Danes.

The ancient house of Holstein, sunk into that of Oldenburg, had been advanced by election to the throne of Denmark in 1449. All the kingdoms of the North were at that time elective ; but the kingdom of Denmark soon after became hereditary. One of its kings, called Christiern III. had such a tender affection for his brother Adolphus, or, at least, such a regard for his interest, as is seldom to be met with among princes. He was desirous of investing him with sovereign power, and yet he could not dismember his own dominions. He therefore divided with him the dutchies of Holstein-Gottorp and Sleswick, by an odd kind
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of agreement, the substance of which was, that the descendants of Adolphus should ever after govern Holstein in conjunction with the kings of Denmark; that those two dutchies should belong to both in common; and that the king of Denmark should be able to do nothing in Holstein without the duke, nor the duke without the king. So strange an union, of which, however, we have had within these few years a similar instance in the same family, was, for near the space of eighty years, the source of perpetual disputes between the crown of Denmark and the house of Holstein-Gottorp; the kings always endeavouring to oppress the dukes, and the dukes to render themselves independent. A struggle of this nature had cost the last duke his liberty and sovereignty, both which, however, he recovered at the conferences of Altena in 1689, by the interposition of Sweden, England, and Holland, who became guarantees for the execution of the treaty. But as a treaty between princes is frequently no more than a giving way to necessity, till such time as the stronger shall be able to crush the weaker, the contest was revived with greater virulence than ever between the new king of Denmark and the young duke. And while the duke was at Stockholm, the Danes had already committed some acts of hostility in the country of Holstein, and had entered into a secret agreement with the king of Poland, to attack the king of Sweden himself.

Frederick Augustus, elector of Saxony, whom neither the eloquence nor negotiations of the abbé de Polignac, nor the great qualities of the prince of Conti, his competitor for the throne, had been able to prevent from being chosen king of Poland about two years before, was a prince

still less remarkable for his incredible strength of body than for his bravery and gallantry of soul. His court, next to that of Lewis XIV. was the most splendid of any in Europe. Never was prince more generous or munificent, or bestowed his favours with a better grace. He had purchased the votes of one half of the Polish nobility, and overawed the other by the approach of a Saxon army. As he thought he should have need of his troops in order to establish himself the more firmly on the throne, he wanted a pretext for retaining them in Poland; and he therefore resolved to employ them in attacking the king of Sweden, which he did on the following occasion.

Livonia, the most beautiful and the most fruitful province of the North, belonged formerly to the knights of the Teutonic order. The Russians, the Poles, and the Swedes, had severally disputed the possession of it. The Swedes had carried it from all the rest about an hundred years ago; and it had been formally ceded to them by the peace of Oliva.

The late king Charles XI. amidst his severities to his subjects in general, had not spared the Livonians. He had stripped them of their privileges, and of part of their estates. Patkul, who unhappily hath since become famous for his tragical death, was deputed by the nobility of Livonia to carry to the throne the complaints of the province. He addressed his master in a speech, respectful indeed, but bold, and full of that manly eloquence, which calamity, when joined to courage, never fail to inspire. But kings too frequently consider these public addresses as no more than vain ceremonies, which it is customary to suffer, without paying them any regard. Charles XI.
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however, who could play the hypocrite extremely well, when he was not hurried away by the violence of his passion, gently struck Patkul on the shoulder: "You have spoke for your country, (said he) like a brave man, and I esteem you for it; go on." Notwithstanding, in a few days after, he caused him to be declared guilty of high treason, and as such to be condemned to death. Patkul, who had hid himself, made his escape, and carried his resentment with him to Poland, where he was afterwards admitted into the presence of king Augustus. Charles XI. was now dead; but Patkul's sentence was still in force, and his indignation still unabated. He represented to his Polish majesty the facility of conquering Livonia, the people of which were mad with despair, and ready to throw off the Swedish yoke; while the king was a child, and unable to make any resistance. These representations were well received by a prince, who already flattered himself with the agreeable hopes of this important conquest. Augustus had engaged at his coronation to exert his most vigorous efforts, in order to recover the provinces which Poland had lost; and he imagined, that, by making an irruption into Livonia, he should at once please the people and establish his own power; in both which particulars, however promising of success, he at last found himself fatally disappointed. Every thing was soon got ready for a sudden invasion, which he resolved to make without having recourse to the vain formalities of declarations of war and manifestoes. The storm thickened at the same time on the side of Muscovy. The monarch who governed that kingdom merits the attention of posterity.

Peter Alexiowitz, czar of Russia, had already made himself formidable by the battle he had gained over the Turks in 1697, and by the reduction of Asoph, which opened to him the dominion of the Black Sea. But it was by actions still more glorious than even his victories, that he aspired to the name of Great. Muscovy, or Russia, comprehends the northern parts of Asia and of Europe, and from the frontiers of China extends, for the space of fifteen hundred leagues, to the borders of Poland and Sweden. This immense country, however, was hardly known to Europe, before the time of the czar Peter. The Muscovites were less civilized than the Mexicans, when discovered by Cortez: born the slaves of masters as barbarous as themselves, they were sunk into a state of the most profound ignorance, into a total want of all the arts and sciences, and into such an insensibility of that want, as effectually suppressed every exertion of industry. An ancient law, which they held to be sacred, forbade them, under pain of death, to leave their native country without permission of their patriarch. This law, made with a view to preclude them from all opportunities of becoming sensible of their slavery, was very acceptable to a people, who, in the depth of their misery and ignorance, disdained all commerce with foreign nations.

The æra of the Muscovites began at the creation of the world: they reckoned up 7207 years to the beginning of the last century, without being able to assign any reason for this computation. The first day of their year answered to the thirteenth of our month of November. The reason they alledge for this regulation is, that it is probable

bable that God created the world in autumn, the season when the fruits of the earth are in their full maturity. Thus, the only appearances of knowledge which they had were founded upon gross errors; not one of them ever dreamed that the autumn of Muscovy might possibly be the spring of another country, situated in an opposite climate. Nor is it long since the people at Moscow were going to burn the secretary of a Persian ambassador, who had foretold an eclipse of the sun. They did not so much as know the use of figures; but in all their computations made use of little beads strung upon brass-wires. They had no other manner of reckoning in their computing-houses, not even in the treasury of the czar.

Their religion was, and still is, that of the Greek church, intermixed with many superstitious rites, to which they are the more strongly attached, in proportion as they are the more ridiculous, and their burden the more intolerable. Few Muscovites would venture to eat a pigeon, because the Holy Ghost is painted in the form of a dove. They regularly observed four lents in the year; and during those times of abstinence, they never presumed to eat either eggs or milk. God and St. Nicholas were the objects of their worship, and next to them the czar and the patriarch. The authority of the last was as unbounded as the people's ignorance. He pronounced sentences of death, and inflicted the most cruel punishments, without any possibility of an appeal from his tribunal. Twice a-year he made a solemn procession on horse-back, attended by all his clergy in order. The czar on foot held the bridle of his horse, and the people prostrated themselves before him in the streets, as the Tartars do before their
grand

grand lama. Confession was in use among them; but it was only in cases of the greatest crimes. In these absolution was necessary, but not repentance. They thought themselves pure in the sight of God, as soon as they received the benediction of their papas. Thus they passed, without remorse, from confession to theft and murder; and what among other Christians is a restraint from vice, with them was an encouragement to wickedness. On a fast-day, they would not even venture to drink milk; but on a festival, masters of families, priests, married women and maids, would make no scruple to intoxicate themselves with brandy. However, there were religious disputes among them as well as in other countries; but their greatest controversy was, whether laymen should make the sign of the cross with two fingers or with three. One Jacob Nursoff, in the preceding reign, had raised a sedition in Astracan about this very quarrel. There were even some fanatics among them, as there are in those civilized nations where every one is a theologian; and Peter, who always carried justice to the extreme of cruelty, caused some of these wretched creatures, who were called Vosko-jesuits, to be committed to the flames.

The czar, in his vast dominions, had many other subjects who were not Christians. The Tartars, inhabiting the western coasts of the Caspian Sea and the Palus Mæotis, were Mahometans; the Siberians, the Ostiacks, and the Samoides, who lie towards the Frozen Sea, were savages, some of whom were idolaters, and others had not the least knowledge of a God; and yet the Swedes who were sent prisoners among them, were better pleased

pleased with their manners than with those of the ancient Muscovites.

Peter Alexiowitz had received an education that tended still more to encrease the barbarity of this part of the world. His natural disposition led him to caress strangers, before he knew what advantages he might derive from their acquaintance. Le Fort, as hath been already observed, was the first instrument he employed to change the face of affairs in Muscovy. His mighty genius, which a barbarous education had hitherto checked but not destroyed, broke forth all of a sudden. He resolved to be a man, to command men, and to create a new nation. Many princes before him had renounced crowns, wearied out with the intolerable load of public affairs; but no man had ever divested himself of the royal character, in order to learn the art of governing better: this was a stretch of heroism which was reserved for Peter the Great alone.

He left Muscovy in 1698, having reigned as yet but two years, and went to Holland, disguised under a common name, as if he had been a menial servant of that same Mr. le Fort, whom he sent in quality of ambassador-extraordinary to the states-general. As soon as he arrived at Amsterdam, he enrolled his name among the shipwrights of the admiralty of the Indies, and wrought in the yard like the other mechanics. At his leisure hours he learned such parts of the mathematics as are useful to a prince, fortification, navigation, and the art of drawing plans. He went into the workmen's shops, and examined all their manufactures: nothing could escape his observation. From thence he passed over into England, where having perfected himself in the art

art of ship-building, he returned to Holland, carefully observing every thing that might turn to the advantage of his country. At last, after two years of travel and labour, to which no man but himself would have willingly submitted, he again made his appearance in Muscovy, with all the arts of Europe in his train. Artists of every kind followed him in abundance. Then were seen, for the first time, large Russian ships in the Baltick, and on the Black Sea and the Ocean. Stately buildings, of a regular architecture, were raised among the Russian huts. He founded colleges, academies, printing-houses, and libraries. The cities were brought under a regular police. The cloaths and customs of the people were gradually changed, though not without some difficulty; and the Muscovites learned by degrees the true nature of a social state. Even their superstitious rites were abolished; the dignity of the patriarch was suppressed; and the czar declared himself the head of the church. This last enterprize, which would have cost a prince less absolute than Peter both his throne and his life, succeeded almost without opposition, and insured to him the success of all his other innovations.

After having humbled an ignorant and a barbarous clergy, he ventured to make a trial of instructing them, though by that means he ran the risque of rendering them formidable; but he was too conscious of his own power to entertain any apprehension from that quarter. He caused philosophy and theology to be taught in the few monasteries that still remained. True it is, this theology still favours of that barbarous period in which Peter civilized his people. A gentleman of undoubted veracity assured me, that he was
present

present at a public disputation, where the point of controversy was, whether the practice of smoking tobacco was a sin? The respondent alledged, that it was lawful to get drunk with brandy, but not to smoke, because the holy scripture saith, "That that which proceedeth out of the mouth defileth a man, and that which entereth into it doth not defile him."

The monks were not satisfied with this reformation. Hardly had the czar erected his printing-houses, when these pious drones made use of them to publish declamations against their sovereign. One of them affirmed in print that Peter was Antichrist; and his arguments were, that he deprived the living of their beards, and allowed the dead to be dissected in his academy. But another monk, who had a mind to make his fortune, refuted this book, and proved that Peter could not be Antichrist, because the number 666 was not to be found in his name. The libeller was broke upon the wheel, and the author of the refutation was made bishop of Rezan.

The reformer of Muscovy enacted a very wholesome law, the want of which reflects disgrace upon many civilized nations. By this law, no man engaged in the service of the state, no citizen established in trade, and especially no minor, was allowed to retire into a convent.

Peter knew of what infinite consequence it was to prevent useful subjects from consecrating themselves to idleness, and to hinder young people from disposing of their liberty, at an age when they are incapable of disposing of the least part of their patrimony. This law, however, so plainly calculated for the general interest of mankind, is daily eluded

cluded by the industry of the monks ; as if they, forsooth, were gainers by peopling their convents at the expence of their country.

The czar not only subjected the church to the state, after the example of the Turkish emperors, but, what was a more masterly stroke of policy, he dissolved a militia of much the same nature with that of the janissaries : and what the sultans had attempted in vain, he accomplished in a short time : he disbanded the Russian janissaries, who were called Strelits, and who kept the czars in subjection. These troops, more formidable to their masters than to their neighbours, consisted of about thirty thousand foot, one half of which remained at Moscow, while the other was stationed upon the frontiers. The pay of a strelits was no more than four roubles a-year ; but this deficiency was amply compensated by privileges and extortions. Peter at first formed a company of foreigners, among whom he enrolled his own name, and did not think it below him to begin the service in the character of a drummer, and to perform the duties of that mean office ; so much did the nation stand in need of examples ! By degrees he became an officer. He gradually raised new regiments ; and, at last, finding himself master of a well-disciplined army, he broke the strelits, who durst not disobey.

The cavalry were nearly the same with that of Poland, or France, when this last kingdom was no more than an assemblage of fiefs. The Russian gentlemen mounted horse at their own expence, and fought without discipline, and sometimes without any other arms than a sabre or a bow, incapable of obeying, and consequently of conquering.

Peter

Peter the Great taught them to obey, both by the example he set them, and by the punishments he inflicted; for he served in the quality of a soldier and subaltern officer, and as czar he severely punished the boyards, that is, the gentlemen, who pretended that it was the privilege of their order not to serve but by their own consent. He established a regular body to serve the artillery, and took five hundred bells from the churches to found cannon. In the year 1714, he had thirteen thousand brass cannon. He likewise formed some troops of dragoons, a kind of militia very suitable to the genius of the Muscovites, and to the size of their horses, which are small. In 1738 the Russians had thirty regiments of dragoons, consisting of a thousand men each, and well accoutered.

He likewise established the Russian hussars; and had even a school of engineers, in a country where, before his time, no one understood the elements of geometry.

He was himself a good engineer; but his chief excellence lay in his knowledge of naval affairs: he was an able sea-captain, a skilful pilot, a good sailor, an expert ship-wright, and his knowledge of these arts was the more meritorious, as he was born with a great dread of the water. In his youth he could not pass over a bridge without trembling: on all these occasions he caused the wooden windows of his coach to be shut; but of this constitutional weakness he soon got the better by his courage and resolution.

He caused a beautiful harbour to be built at the mouth of the Tanais, near Asoph, in which he proposed to keep a number of gallies; and some time after, thinking that these vessels, so long,
light,

light, and flat, would probably succeed in the Baltick, he had upwards of three hundred of them built at his favourite city of Petersburg. He shewed his subjects the method of building ships with fir only, and taught them the art of navigation. He had even learned surgery, and, in a case of necessity, has been known to tap a dropsical person. He was well versed in mechanics, and instructed the artists.

Indeed the revenue of the czar, when compared to the immense extent of his dominions, was very inconsiderable. It never amounted to four and twenty millions of our money, reckoning the mark at about fifty livres, as we do to-day, though perhaps we may do otherwise to-morrow. But a man may always be accounted rich, who has it in his power to accomplish great undertakings. It is not the scarcity of money that weakens a state; it is the want of hands, and of men of abilities.

Russia, notwithstanding the women are fruitful and the men robust, is far from being populous. Peter himself, in civilizing his dominions, unhappily contributed to their depopulation. Frequent levies in his wars, which were long unsuccessful; nations transported from the coasts of the Caspian Sea to those of the Baltick, destroyed by fatigue, or cut off by diseases; three fourths of the Muscovite children dying of the small-pox, which is more dangerous in those climates than in any other; in a word, the melancholy effects of a government savage for a long time, and even barbarous in its policy; to all these causes it is owing, that in this country, comprehending so great a part of the continent, there are still vast deserts. Russia, at present, is supposed to contain five hundred thousand families of gentlemen; two hundred

dred thousand lawyers; something more than five millions of citizens and peasants, who pay a sort of tax; six hundred thousand men who live in the provinces conquered from the Swedes; the Cossacks in the Ukraine, and the Tartars that are subject to Muscovy, do not exceed two millions; in fine, it appears that in this immense country, there are not above fourteen millions of men, that is, a little more than two thirds of the inhabitants of France.

While Peter was employed in changing the laws, the manners, the militia, and the very face of his country, he likewise resolved to encrease his greatness by encouraging commerce, which at once constitutes the riches of a particular state, and contributes to the interest of the world in general. He resolved to make Russia the center of trade between Asia and Europe. He determined to join the Duna, the Volga, and the Tanais, by canals, of which he drew the plans; and thus to open a new passage from the Baltick to the Euxine and Caspian Seas, and from these seas to the Northern Ocean.

The port of Archangel, frozen up for nine months in the year, and which could not be entered without making a long and dangerous circuit, he did not think sufficiently commodious. From the year 1700, he had formed a design of building a port upon the Baltic sea, that should become the magazine of the North, and of raising a city that should prove the capital of his empire.

He was already attempting to find out a north-east passage to China; and the manufactures of Pekin and Paris were designed to embellish his new city.

A road 754 versts long, running through marshes that were to be drained, led from Moscow to his new city. Most of these projects were executed by his own hands; and the two empresses, who have successively followed him, have even improved upon his schemes, when they were practicable, and abandoned none but such as it was impossible to accomplish.

He was always travelling up and down his dominions, as much as his wars would allow him; but he travelled like a legislator and natural philosopher, examining nature every where, endeavouring to correct or perfect her; sounding with his own hands the depth of seas and rivers; repairing sluices, visiting docks, causing mines to be searched for, assaying metals, ordering accurate plans to be drawn, in the execution of which he himself assisted.

He built upon a very wild and uncultivated spot, the imperial city of Petersburg, which now contains sixty thousand houses, and is the residence of a splendid court, where all the refined pleasures are known and enjoyed. He built the harbour of Cronstad, on the Neva, and St. Croix, on the frontiers of Persia; erected forts on the Ukraine, and in Siberia; established offices of admiralty at Archangel, Petersburg, Astracan, and Azoph; founded arsenals, and built and endowed hospitals. All his own houses were mean, and executed in a bad taste; but he spared no expences in rendering the public buildings grand and magnificent.

The sciences, which in other countries have been the slow product of so many ages, were, by his care and industry, imported into Russia in full perfection. He established an academy on the

the plan of the famous societies of Paris and London. The Delisles, the Bulfingers, the Hermannus's, the Bernouilles, and the celebrated Wolf, a man who excelled in every branch of philosophy, were all invited and brought to Peterburg at a great expence. This academy still subsists; and the Muscovites, at length, have philosophers of their own nation.

He obliged the young nobility to travel for improvement, and to bring back into Russia the politeness of foreign countries; and I have seen some young Russians who were men of genius and of knowledge. Thus it was that a single man changed the face of the greatest empire in the universe. It is however a shocking reflection, that this reformer of mankind should have been deficient in that first of all virtues, the virtue of humanity. Brutality in his pleasures, ferocity in his manners, and cruelty in his punishments, sullied the lustre of so many virtues. He civilized his subjects, and yet himself remained a barbarian. He would sometimes, with his own hands, execute sentences of death upon the unhappy criminals; and, in the midst of a revel, would shew his dexterity in cutting off heads. There are princes in Africa, who, with their own hands, shed the blood of their subjects; but these kings are always detested as barbarians. The death of a son, whom he ought to have corrected, or at most disinherited, would render the memory of Peter the object of universal hatred, were it not that the great and many blessings he bestowed upon his subjects, were almost sufficient to excuse his cruelty to his own offspring.

Such was the czar Peter; and his great projects were little more than in embrio when he joined the kings of Poland and Denmark against a child whom they all despised. The founder of the Russian empire was ambitious of being a conqueror; and such he thought he might easily become by the prosecution of a war, which, being entered into with so much prudence, could not fail, he imagined, of proving advantageous to his subjects: the art of war was a new art, which it was necessary to teach his people.

Besides, he wanted a port on the east side of the Baltic, to facilitate the execution of all his schemes. He wanted the province of Ingria, which lies to the north-east of Livonia. The Swedes were in possession of it, and from them he resolved to take it by force. His predecessors had had claims upon Ingria, Estonia, and Livonia; and the present seemed a favourable opportunity for reviving these claims, which had lain buried for a hundred years, and had been cancelled by the sanction of treaties. He therefore made a league with the king of Poland, to wrest from young Charles XII. all the territories that are bounded by the gulph of Finland, the Baltic Sea, Poland, and Muscovy.

THE
HISTORY
OF
CHARLES XII.
KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK II.

THE CONTENTS.

A sudden and surprising Change in the Character of CHARLES XII. at eighteen Years of Age: he undertakes a War against DENMARK, POLAND, and MUSCOVY: finishes the DANISH War in six Weeks: with eight thousand SWEDES defeats eighty thousand RUSSIANS; and then penetrates into POLAND. A Description of POLAND, and its form of Government. CHARLES gains several Battles; becomes master of POLAND, where he prepares to nominate a King.

IN this manner did three powerful sovereigns menace the infancy of Charles XII. The news of these preparations struck the Swedes with consternation, and alarmed the council. All the great generals were now dead; and every thing was to be feared under the reign of a young king, who had hitherto given no very favourable impressions of his character. He hardly ever as-

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sisted

sisted at the council; and when he did, it was only to sit cross-legged on the table, absent, inattentive, and seemingly regardless of every thing that passed.

The council happened to hold a deliberation in his presence concerning the dangerous situation of affairs; some of the members proposed to avert the storm by negotiations, when all on a sudden Charles rose with an air of gravity and assurance, like a man of superior consequence who has chosen his side: "Gentlemen, said he, I am resolved never to begin an unjust war, nor ever to finish a just one but by the destruction of my enemies. My resolution is fixed. I will attack the first that shall declare against me; and, after having conquered him, I hope I shall be able to strike terror into the rest." All the old counsellors were astonished at this declaration, and looked at one another without daring to reply. Agreeably surprised to find their king possessed of such noble sentiments, and ashamed to be less sanguine in their expectations than him, they received his orders for the war with admiration.

They were still more surprised when they saw him at once bid adieu to the most innocent amusements of youth. The moment he began to make preparations for the war, he entered on a new course of life, from which he never afterwards deviated in one single instance. Full of the idea of Alexander and Cæsar, he proposed to imitate those two conquerors in every thing but their vices. No longer did he indulge himself in magnificence, sports, and recreations: he reduced his table to the most rigid frugality. He had formerly been fond of gaiety and dress; but from

that time he was never clad otherwise than a common soldier. He was supposed to have entertained a passion for a lady of his court: whether there was any foundation for this supposition does not appear; certain it is, he ever after renounced all commerce with women, not only for fear of being governed by them, but likewise to set an example of continence to his soldiers, whom he resolved to confine within the strictest discipline; perhaps too from the vanity of being thought the only king that could conquer a passion so difficult to be overcome. He likewise determined to abstain from wine during the rest of his life. Some people have told me, that his only reason for taking this resolution was to subdue his vicious inclinations in every thing, and to add one virtue more to his former stock; but the greater number have assured me, that it was to punish himself for a riot he had committed, and an affront he had offered to a lady at table, even in presence of the queen-mother. If that be true, this condemnation of his own conduct, and this abstinence which he imposed upon himself during the remainder of his life, is a species of heroism no less worthy of admiration*.

He began by assuring the duke of Holstein, his brother-in-law, of a speedy assistance. Eight thousand men were immediately sent into Pomerania, a province bordering upon Holstein, in order to enable the duke to make head against the Danes. The duke indeed had need of them. His dominions were already laid waste, the castle of Gottorp taken, and the city of Tonningen

* If we may judge from the whole tenour of his life and character, he had in fact no tenderness in his nature.

pressed by an obstinate siege, to which the king of Denmark was come in person, in order to enjoy a conquest, which he held to be certain. This spark began to throw the empire into a flame. On the one side the Saxon troops of the king of Poland, those of Brandenburg, Wolfenbüttele, and Hesse Cassel, advanced to join the Danes. On the other, the king of Sweden's eight thousand men, the troops of Hanover and Zell, and three Dutch regiments, came to the assistance of the duke. While the little country of Holstein was thus the theatre of war, two squadrons, the one from England, and the other from Holland, appeared in the Baltic. These two states were guarantees of the treaty of Altena, which the Danes had broke, and were eager to assist the duke of Holstein, because it was for the interest of their trade to check the growing power of the king of Denmark. They knew, that should he once become master of the Sound, he would impose the most rigorous laws upon the commercial nations, as soon as he should be able to do it with impunity. This consideration has long induced the English and the Dutch to maintain, as much as they can, a balance of power between the princes of the North. They joined the young king of Sweden, who seemed to be in danger of being crushed by such a powerful combination of enemies, and assisted him for the very same reason that the others attacked him; namely, because they thought him incapable of defending himself.

He was taking the diversion of boar-hunting when he received the news of the Saxons having invaded Livonia. This pastime he enjoyed in a manner equally new and dangerous. No other weapons

weapons were used but sharp-pointed sticks, with which the hunters defended themselves behind a cord stretched between two trees. A boar of a huge size came straight against the king, who, after a long struggle, by the help of the cord and stick, levelled him with the ground. It must be acknowledged, that in reading of such adventures as these, in considering the surprising strength of king Augustus, and reviewing the travels of the czar, we are almost tempted to think that we live in the times of Hercules and Theseus.

Charles set out for his first campaign on the eighth day of May, new stile, in the year 1700, and left Stockholm, whither he never returned. An innumerable company of people attended him to the port of Carelscroon, offering up their prayers for his safety, bedewing the ground with their tears, and expressing their admiration of his virtue. Before he left Sweden, he established at Stockholm a council of defence, composed of several senators, who were to take care of whatever concerned the navy, the army, and the fortifications of the country. The body of the senate were provisionally to regulate every thing besides, in the interior government of the kingdom. Having thus settled the administration of public affairs, and freed his mind from every other care, he devoted himself intirely to war. His fleet consisted of three and forty vessels: that in which he sailed, named the King Charles, and the largest that had ever been seen, was a ship of an hundred and twenty guns. Count Piper, his first minister, general Renschild, and the count de Guiscard, the French ambassador in Sweden, embarked along with him. He joined the squadrons of the allies

allies. The Danish fleet declined the combat, and gave the three combined fleets an opportunity of approaching so near to Copenhagen, as to throw some bombs into it.

Certain it is, it was the king himself that first proposed to general Renschild to make a descent, and to besiege Copenhagen by land, while it should be blocked up by sea. Renschild was surprised to receive a proposal that discovered as much prudence as courage, from such a young and unexperienced prince. Every thing was soon got ready for the descent. Orders were given for the embarkation of five thousand men, who lay upon the coast of Sweden, and who were joined to the troops they had on board. The king quitted his large ship and went into a frigate, and they then began to dispatch towards the shore three hundred grenadiers in small shallops. Among the shallops were some flat-bottomed boats that carried the fascines, the chevaux de frize, and the instruments of the pioneers. Five hundred chosen men followed in other shallops. Last of all came the king's men of war, with two English and two Dutch frigates, which were to favour the landing of the troops under cover of their cannon.

Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, is situated in the isle of Zealand, in the midst of a beautiful plain, having the Sound on the north-east, and on the east the Baltic, where the king of Sweden then lay. At the unexpected movement of the vessels, which threatened a descent, the inhabitants were struck with consternation. Alarmed at the inactivity of their own fleet, and the motion of the Swedish ships, they looked round with terror, to observe where the storm would fall. Charles's fleet stopped over against Humblebeck, within seven

seven miles of Copenhagen. In that place the Danes immediately drew up their cavalry. Their foot were posted behind thick entrenchments; and what artillery they could bring thither, was pointed against the Swedes.

The king then quitted his frigate, to throw himself into the first shallop, at the head of his guards. The French ambassador being always at his side, "Sir, said the king to him, in Latin, (for he would never speak French,) you have no quarrel with the Danes, you need go no farther, if you please." "Sir, answered the count de Guiscard, in French, the king my master hath ordered me to attend your majesty. I hope you will not this day banish me from your court, which never before appeared so splendid." So saying, he gave his hand to the king, who leaped into the shallop, whither he was followed by count Piper and the ambassador. They advanced under shelter of the cannon of the ships that favoured the landing. The small boats were still about three hundred paces from the shore. Charles, impatient to land, jumped into the sea, sword in hand, the water reaching above his waist. His ministers, the French ambassador, the officers and soldiers, immediately followed his example, and marched up to the shore, amidst a shower of musket-shot from the enemy. The king, who had never in his life before heard a discharge of muskets loaded with ball, asked major Stuart, who stood next him, what meant that whistling which he heard. "It is the noise of the musket balls, which they fire upon you," replied the major. "Very well, says the king, henceforward that shall be my music." At that instant the major

received a shot in his shoulder, and a lieutenant on the other side of him fell dead at his feet.

It is usual for troops that are attacked in their trenches to be beat; because the assailants have always an impetuosity of courage, which the defenders cannot have; and besides, to wait for the enemy in our lines is frequently a confession of our own weakness, and of their superiority. The Danish horse and foot took to their heels, after a feeble resistance. The king having become master of their intrenchments, fell upon his knees to return thanks to God for the first success of his arms. He forthwith caused redoubts to be raised towards the town, and himself marked out the place for the encampment. Mean while he sent back his vessels to Schonen, a port of Sweden bordering upon Copenhagen, for a reinforcement of nine thousand men. Every thing conspired to favour the ardour of Charles's courage. The nine thousand men were upon the shore ready to embark, and next day a favourable wind brought them safe to the place of their destination.

All this passed within sight of the Danish fleet, who durst not venture to advance. Copenhagen, struck with terror, immediately sent deputies to the king, beseeching him not to bombard the city. He received them on horseback, at the head of his regiment of guards; and the deputies fell upon their knees before him. He exacted from the citizens four hundred thousand rix-dollars, commanding them, at the same time, to supply his camp with all kind of provisions, for which he assured them they should be honestly paid. They brought the provisions, because they durst not disobey; but they little expected that conquerors would condescend to pay for them; and

and those who brought them were surprised to find that they were generously and instantly paid, even by the meanest soldier in the army. There had long prevailed among the Swedish troops a strict discipline, which had greatly contributed to the success of their arms; and the king rendered it still more rigid. No soldier durst refuse to pay for what he had bought, still less to go a-plundering, nor even so much as to go out of the camp. What is more, he would not allow his troops, after a victory, to strip the bodies of the dead, until they had obtained his permission; and he easily brought them to the observance of this injunction. Prayers were regularly said in his camp twice a day; at seven in the morning and four in the afternoon; and he never failed to attend them himself, in order to give his soldiers an example of piety as well as of valour. His camp, which was better regulated than Copenhagen, had every thing in abundance; the peasants chusing much rather to sell their provisions to their enemies the Swedes, than to the Danes, who did not pay them so well. Even the citizens were more than once obliged to come to the Swedish camp to purchase those provisions which they could not find in their own markets.

The king of Denmark was then in Holstein, whither he seemed to have gone for no other purpose than to raise the siege of Tonningen. He saw the Baltic covered with the enemies ships, and a young conqueror already master of Zealand, and just upon the point of taking possession of his capital. He caused an edict to be published throughout all his dominions, promising liberty to every one that should take up arms against the Swedes. This declaration was of great

weight in a country which was formerly free, but where all the peasants, and even many of the citizens, are now-a-days slaves. Charles sent word to the king of Denmark, that his only intention in making war, was to oblige him to come to a peace; and that he must either resolve to do justice to the duke of Holstein, or see Copenhagen levelled with the ground, and his dominions laid waste with fire and sword. The Dane was too happy in having to do with a conqueror who valued himself on his regard to justice. A congress was held in the town of Travendal, which lies on the frontiers of Holstein. The king of Sweden would not allow the negotiations to be protracted by the arts of ministers; but determined to have the treaty finished with the same rapidity with which he had made his descent upon Zealand. In effect, a peace was concluded, on the fifth of August, to the advantage of the duke of Holstein, who was indemnified for all the expences of the war, and delivered from oppression. The king of Sweden, fully satisfied with having succoured his ally, and humbled his enemy, would accept of nothing for himself. Thus Charles XII. at eighteen years of age, began and finished this war in less than six weeks.

Exactly at the same time, the king of Poland invested Riga, the capital of Livonia; and the czar was advancing on the east, at the head of near an hundred thousand men. Riga was defended by the old count d'Alberg, a Swedish general, who, at the age of eighty, joined all the fire of youth to the experience of sixty campaigns. Count Flemming, afterwards minister of Poland, a man of distinguished abilities as well in the field as the cabinet, and Patkul the Livonian, pushed

pushed the siege with great vigour, under the direction of the king; but notwithstanding several advantages which the besiegers had gained, the experience of old count d'Alberg baffled all their efforts, and the king of Poland began to despair of being able to take the town. At last he laid hold of an honourable pretext for raising the siege. Riga was full of merchants goods belonging to the Dutch. The states-general ordered their ambassador at the court of Augustus, to represent the matter to his majesty. The king of Poland did not long resist their importunities, and agreed to raise the siege, rather than occasion the least damage to his allies, who were not greatly surpris'd at this stretch of complaisance, to the real cause of which they were no strangers.

The only thing that Charles had now to do, towards the finishing of his first campaign, was to march against his rival in glory, Peter Alexowitz. He was the more exasperated against him, as there were still at Stockholm three Muscovite ambassadors, who had lately sworn to the renewal of an inviolable peace. Possessed, as he was himself of the most incorruptible integrity, he could not conceive how a legislator, like the czar, should make a jest of what ought to be held so sacred. The young prince, whose sense of honour was extremely refined, never imagined that there could be one system of morality for kings, and another for private persons. The emperor of Muscovy had just published a manifesto, which he had much better have suppressed. He there alledged, as the reason of the war, the little respect that had been shewn him when he went incognito to Riga, and the extravagant prices

his ambassadors had been obliged to pay for provisions. Such were the mighty injuries for which he ravaged Ingria, with eighty thousand men!

At the head of this great army he appeared before Narva, on the first of October, a season more severe in that climate than the month of January is at Paris. The czar, who in such weather would sometimes ride post for four hundred leagues, to see a mine or a canal, was not more sparing of his troops than of himself. He knew, moreover, that the Swedes, ever since the time of Gustavus Adolphus, could make war in the depth of winter as well as in summer; and he wanted to accustom the Russians likewise to forget all distinction of seasons, and to render them, one day, equal to the Swedes. Thus, in a time when frost and snow compel other nations in more temperate climates to agree to a suspension of arms, the czar Peter besieged Narva, within thirty degrees of the pole, and Charles XII. advanced to its relief. The czar was no sooner arrived before the place, than he immediately put in practice what he had learned in his travels. He marked out his camp, fortified it on all sides, raised redoubts at certain distances, and opened the trenches himself. He had given the command of his troops to the duke de Croix, a German, and an able general, but who at that time was little assisted by the Russian officers. As for himself, he had no other rank in the army than that of a private lieutenant. He thereby gave an example of military obedience to his nobility, hitherto unacquainted with discipline, and accustomed to march at the head of ill-armed slaves, without experience and without order. There

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was nothing strange in seeing him who had turned carpenter at Amsterdam, in order to procure himself fleets, serve as lieutenant at Narva, to teach his subjects the art of war.

The Muscovites are strong and indefatigable, and perhaps as courageous as the Swedes; but it requires time and discipline to render troops warlike and invincible. The only regiments that could be depended upon were commanded by some German officers; but their number was very inconsiderable. The rest were barbarians forced from their forests, and covered with the skins of wild beasts; some armed with arrows, and others with clubs. Few of them had fuses; none of them had ever seen a regular siege; and there was not one good cannoneer in the whole army. An hundred and fifty cannon, which one would have thought must have soon reduced the little town of Narva to ashes, were hardly able to make a breach, while the artillery of the city mowed down at every discharge whole ranks of the enemy in their trenches. Narva was almost without fortifications: the baron de Hoorn, who commanded there, had not a thousand regular troops; and yet this immense army could not reduce it in ten weeks.

It was now the fifth of November, when the czar learned that the king of Sweden had crossed the sea with two hundred transports, and was advancing to the relief of Narva. The Swedes were not above twenty thousand strong. The czar had no advantage but that of numbers. Far therefore from despising his enemy, he employed every art in order to crush him. Not content with eighty thousand men, he resolved to oppose to him another army still, and to check

his progress at every step. He had already given orders for the march of about thirty thousand men, who were advancing from Pleskow with great expedition. He then took a step that would have rendered him contemptible, could a legislator who had performed such great and glorious actions incur that imputation. He left his camp, where his presence was necessary, to go in quest of this new army, which might have arrived well enough without him, and seemed by this conduct to betray his fear of engaging in his entrenchments a young and unexperienced prince who might come to attack him.

Be that as it will, he resolved to shut up Charles XII. between two armies. Nor was this all: a detachment of thirty thousand men from the camp before Narva were posted at a league's distance from the city, directly in the king of Sweden's road: twenty thousand strelits were placed farther off, upon the same road; and five thousand others composed an advanced guard; and he must necessarily force his way through all these troops before he could reach the camp, which was fortified with a rampart and double fosse. The king of Sweden had landed at Pernaw, in the gulph of Riga, with about sixteen thousand foot, and little more than four thousand horse. From Pernaw he made a flying march to Revel, followed by all his cavalry, and only by four thousand foot. He always marched in the van of his army, without waiting for the rear. He soon found himself, with his eight thousand men only, before the first posts of the enemy. He immediately resolved, without the least hesitation, to attack them, one after another, before they could possibly learn with what a small number they had

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to engage. The Muscovites seeing the Swedes come upon them, imagined they had a whole army to encounter. The advanced guard of five thousand men, posted among rocks, a station where one hundred resolute men might have stopped the march of a large army, fled at their first approach. The twenty thousand men that lay behind them, perceiving the flight of their fellow soldiers, took the alarm, and carried their terror and confusion with them into the camp. All the posts were carried in two days; and what upon other occasions would have been reckoned three distinct victories, did not retard the king's march for the space of one hour. He appeared then at last with his eight thousand men, exhausted by the fatigues of so long a march, before a camp of eighty thousand Muscovites, defended by a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon; and, scarce allowing his troops any time for rest, he instantly gave orders for the attack.

The signal was two fuses, and the word in German, "With the aid of God." A general officer having represented to him the greatness of the danger, "What, says he, do not you think, that with my eight thousand brave Swedes, I may easily beat eighty thousand Russians?" But soon after, fearing that what he had said might favour too much of gasconade, he ran after the officer, "And are not you (says he) of the same opinion? havenot I a double advantage over the enemy? one, that their cavalry can be of no service to them; the other, that the place being narrow, their number will only incommode them; and thus in reality I shall be stronger than they." The officer did not care to differ from him; and thus they

they marched against the Muscovites about mid-day, on the 30th of November 1700.

As soon as their cannon had made a breach in their intrenchments, the Swedes advanced with screwed bayonets, having a furious shower of snow on their backs, which drove full in the face of the enemy. The Russians stood the shock for half an hour, without flinching. The king made his attack upon the right of the camp, where the czar's quarters lay, hoping to come to a rencounter with him, as he did not know that he had gone in quest of the forty thousand men, who were daily expected to arrive. At the first discharge of the enemy's muskets, he received a shot in his neck; but as it was a spent ball, it lodged in the folds of his black neckcloth, and did him no harm. His horse was killed under him. Mr. de Spar told me, that the king mounted another horse with great agility, saying, "These fellows make me go thorough my exercise;" and continued to fight and give orders with the same presence of mind. After an engagement of three hours, the entrenchments were forced on all sides. The king pursued the right of the enemy as far as the river Narva, with his left wing; if we may be allowed to call by that name about four thousand men, who were in pursuit of near forty thousand. The bridge broke under the fugitives, and the river was immediately filled with dead carcases. The rest returned to their camp, without knowing whither they went; and finding some barracks, they took post behind them. There they defended themselves for a while, as they were not able to make their escape; but at last their generals Dolgorouky, Gollofkin, and Federowitz, surrendered themselves to the king, and laid their
arms

arms at his feet; and while they were presenting them to him, the duke de Croi came up and surrendered himself with thirty officers.

Charles received all these prisoners of distinction with as much civility and politeness as if he had been paying them the honours of an entertainment in his own court. He detained none but the general officers. All the subalterns and common soldiers were disarmed and conducted to the river Narva, where they were supplied with boats for passing over, and allowed to return to their own country. In the mean time night came on, and the right wing of the Muscovites still continued the fight. The Swedes had not lost above six hundred men. Eight thousand Muscovites had been killed in their intrenchments; many were drowned; many had crossed the river; and yet there still remained in the camp a sufficient number to cut off the Swedes to the last man. But the loss of battles is not so much owing to the number of the killed, as to the timidity of those who survive. The king employed the small remains of the day in seizing upon the enemy's artillery. He took possession of an advantageous post between the camp and the city, where he slept a few hours upon the ground, wrapt up in his cloak, intending, at day-break, to fall upon the left wing of the enemy, which was not yet intirely routed. But at two o'clock in the morning, general Wade, who commanded that wing, having heard of the gracious reception the king had given to the other generals, and of his having dismissed all the subaltern officers and soldiers, sent a messenger to him, begging he would grant him the same favour. The conqueror replied, that he should have it, provided he would come

at the head of his troops, and make them lay their arms and colours at his feet. Soon after the general appeared with his Muscovites, to the number of about thirty thousand. They marched, both soldiers and officers, with their heads uncovered, through less than seven thousand Swedes. The soldiers, as they passed the king, threw their guns and swords upon the ground, and the officers presented him with their ensigns and colours. He caused the whole of this multitude to be conducted over the river, without detaining a single soldier. Had he kept them, the number of prisoners would at least have been five times greater than that of the conquerors.

After this, he entered victorious into Narva, accompanied by the duke de Croi, and other general officers of the Muscovites. He ordered their swords to be restored to them all; and knowing that they wanted money, and that the merchants of Narva would not lend them any, he sent a thousand ducats to the duke de Croi, and five hundred to every Muscovite officer, who could not sufficiently admire the civility of this treatment, of which they were incapable of forming the least conception. An account of the victory was immediately drawn up at Narva, in order to be sent to Stockholm, and to the allies of Sweden; but the king expunged with his own hand every circumstance in the relation that tended too much to his own honour, or seemed to reflect upon the czar. His modesty however could not hinder them from striking at Stockholm several medals to perpetuate the memory of these events. Among others they struck one which represented the king on one side, standing on a pedestal, to which were chained a Muscovite,
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a Dane, and a Polander; and on the reverse a Hercules, holding his club, and treading upon a Cerberus, with this inscription: *Tres uno contudit igni.*

Among the prisoners taken at the battle of Narva, there was one whose fate exhibited a remarkable instance of the great inconstancy of fortune. He was the eldest son and heir of the king of Georgia; his name the czarafis Artschelou. This title of czarafis, among the Tartars, as well as in Muscovy, signifies prince, or son of the czar; for the word czar, or tsar, signified king among the ancient Scythians, from whom all these people are descended, and is not derived from the Cæsars of Rome, so long unknown to these barbarians. His father Mittelleski, czar, and master of the most beautiful part of the country, lying between the mountains of Ararat and the eastern coasts of the Black Sea, having been expelled from his kingdom by his own subjects, in 1688, had rather chosen to throw himself into the arms of the emperor of Muscovy, than to apply to the Turks for assistance. His son, a youth of nineteen years of age, followed Peter the Great in his expedition against the Swedes, and was taken fighting by some Finland soldiers, who had already stripped him, and were upon the point of killing him. Count Renschild rescued him from their hands, supplied him with cloaths, and presented him to his master. Charles sent him to Stockholm, where the unfortunate prince died in a few years after. The king, upon seeing him depart, could not help making, in the hearing of his officers, a very natural reflection on the strange fate of an Asiatick prince, born at the foot of Mount Caucasus, and going to live a prisoner among
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the snows of Sweden. "It is just, says he, as if I were one day to be a prisoner among the Crim Tartars." These words made no impression at that time; but, in the sequel, there was but too much occasion to remember them, when the event had proved them to be a prediction.

The czar was advancing, by long marches, with a body of forty thousand Russians, in full hopes of surrounding his enemy on all sides; but before he had proceeded half way, he received intelligence of the battle of Narva, and of the dispersion of his whole army. He was not so foolish as to think of attacking with his forty thousand raw and undisciplined troops, a conqueror, who had lately defeated eighty thousand men in their entrenchments. He returned home, with a determined resolution of disciplining his troops, at the same time that he civilized his subjects. "I know," says he, that the Swedes will beat us for a long time; but, at last, they will teach us to beat them." Moscow, his capital, was in the utmost terror and consternation at the news of this defeat. Such was the pride and ignorance of the people, that they actually imagined they had been conquered by a power more than human, and that the Swedes were so many magicians. This opinion was so general, that public prayers were ordered to be put up to St. Nicholas, the patron of Muscovy, on the occasion. The form of these prayers is too singular to be omitted. It runs thus:

"O thou, who art our perpetual comforter in all our adversities, great St. Nicholas, infinitely powerful, by what sin have we offended thee, in our sacrifices, kneelings, bowings, and thanksgivings, that thou hast thus abandoned us? We implored

plored thy assistance against these terrible, insolent, enraged, dreadful, unconquerable destroyers, when, like lions and bears robbed of their young, they fell upon, terrified, wounded, and slew by thousands, us who are thy people. As it is impossible that this should have happened without forcery and witchcraft, we beseech thee, O great St. Nicholas, to be our champion and standard-bearer, to deliver us from this troop of forcerers, and to drive them far from our frontiers, with the recompense they deserve."

While the Muscovites were thus complaining of their defeat to St. Nicholas, Charles XII. returned thanks to God, and prepared himself for new victories.

The king of Poland had reason to fear, that his enemy, already victorious over the Danes and the Muscovites, would soon turn his arms against him. He entered into a closer alliance with the czar than ever he had done before. These two princes agreed upon an interview, in order to concert their measures. They met at Birsen, a small town in Lithuania, without any of those formalities which serve only to retard business, and neither suited their situation nor their humour. The princes of the North visit one another with a familiarity that has not yet taken place in the more southern parts of Europe. Peter and Augustus spent fifteen days together, in the enjoyment of pleasures, which were even somewhat extravagant; for the czar, amidst his cares for the reformation of his subjects, could never correct his dangerous propension to debauchery.

The king of Poland engaged to furnish the czar with fifty thousand German troops, which were to be hired from several princes, and for which
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the czar was to pay. Peter, on the other hand, was to send fifty thousand Russians into Poland, to learn the art of war, and promised to pay to Augustus three millions of rix dollars in two years. This treaty, had it been carried into execution, might have proved fatal to the king of Sweden: it was a sure and ready method of rendering the Muscovites good soldiers: perhaps it was forging chains for a part of Europe.

Charles XII. exerted his utmost endeavours to prevent the king of Poland from reaping any benefit from this league. After having passed the winter at Narva, he appeared in Livonia in the neighbourhood of Riga, the very town which Augustus had in vain besieged. The Saxon troops were posted along the river Duna, which is very broad in that place; and Charles, who lay on the other side of the river, was obliged to dispute the passage. The Saxons were not commanded by their own prince, who was then sick, but were headed by Marshal Stenau, who acted as general, under whom commanded prince Ferdinand duke of Courland, and that same Patkul, who had formerly, at the hazard of his life, vindicated the privileges of his country, against Charles XI. by his pen, and now defended the same cause against Charles XII. by his arms. The king of Sweden had caused some large boats to be built of a new construction, whose sides were much higher than ordinary, and could be raised or let down, like a draw-bridge. When raised they covered the troops on board, and when let down they served as a bridge to land them. He likewise made use of another artifice. Having observed that the wind blew from the north, where he lay, to the south, where the enemy were encamped, he set fire

fire to a large heap of wet straw, which diffusing a thick smoak over the river, prevented the Saxons from seeing his troops, or observing what he was going to do. Under cover of this cloud, he dispatched some barks filled with more of the same smoaking straw; so that the cloud always encreasing, and being driven by the wind directly to the face of the enemy, rendered it impossible for them to know whether the king was passing or not. Mean while, he alone conducted the execution of his stratagem; and when he had reached the middle of the river, "Well, says he to general Renschild, the Duna will be as favourable to us as the sea of Copenhagen; take my word for it, general, we shall beat them." He arrived at the other side in a quarter of an hour, and was sorry to find that he was only the fourth person that leapt on shore. He forthwith landed his cannon, and drew up his troops in order of battle, while the enemy, blinded with smoke, could make no opposition, except by a few random shot. At last the mist being dispersed by the wind, the Saxons saw the king of Sweden already advancing against them.

Mareschal Stenau lost not a moment. As soon as he observed the Swedes, he rushed upon them with the flower of his cavalry. The violent shock of this body falling upon the Swedes just as they were forming, threw them into confusion. They gave way, were broken, and pursued even into the river. The king of Sweden rallied them in a moment, in the midst of the water, with as much composure as if he had been making a review; then the Swedes, marching more compact than before, repulsed mareschal Stenau, and advanced into the plain. Stenau, finding his troops
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begin to stagger, acted like an able general. He made them retire into a dry place, flanked with a morass and a wood, where his artillery lay. The advantage of the ground, and the time which the Saxons had thus obtained, of recovering from their first surprize, restored to them their former courage. Charles immediately began the attack. He had fifteen thousand men: Stenau and the duke of Courland about twelve thousand, with no other artillery than one dismounted cannon. The battle was obstinate and bloody. The duke had two horses killed under him: he penetrated thrice into the heart of the king's guards; but at length being unhorsed by a blow with the but-end of a musket, his army was thrown into confusion, and no longer disputed the victory. His cuirassiers carried him off with great difficulty, all bruised, and half dead, from the thickest of the fight, and from under the horses heels, which trampled on him.

Immediately after this victory, the king of Sweden advanced to Mittau, the capital of Courland. All the towns of the dutchy surrendered to him at discretion: it was rather a journey than a conquest. From thence he passed without delay into Lithuania, conquering wherever he came: and he felt a pleasing satisfaction, as he himself owned, when he entered triumphant into the town of Birsen, where the king of Poland and the czar had plotted his destruction but a few months before.

It was in this place that he formed the design of dethroning the king of Poland, by the hands of the Poles themselves. One day when he was at table, full of this enterprize, and observing as usual, the strictest temperance, wrapped up in a pro-

profound silence, and seeming, as it were, absorbed in the greatness of his conceptions, a German colonel who waited upon him, said with an audible voice, that the meals which the czar and the king of Poland had made in the same place were somewhat different from those of his majesty. "Yes, says the king, rising, and I shall the more easily spoil their digestion." In short, by intermixing a little policy with the force of his arms, he resolved to hasten the execution of this mighty project.

Poland, a part of the ancient Sarmatia, is somewhat larger than France, but less populous, though it is more so than Sweden. The inhabitants were converted to Christianity only about seven hundred and fifty years ago. It is somewhat surprising, that the Roman language, which never penetrated into that country, is now-a-days spoken in common no where but in Poland; there every one speaks Latin, even the very servants. This extensive country is very fertile; but the natives are only, on that account, so much the less industrious. The artists and tradesmen in Poland, are Scotch, French, and especially Jews. The last have, in this country, near three hundred synagogues; and multiplying too fast, and to too great numbers, they will in time be banished from it, as they have already been from Spain. They buy the corn, the cattle, and the commodities of the country at a low rate, dispose of them at Dantzick, and in Germany, and sell to the nobles at a high price wherewithal to gratify the only species of luxury which they know and love. Thus Poland, watered with the finest rivers in the world, rich in pastures, and in mines of salt, and covered with luxuriant crops, remains

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poor, in spite of its plenty; because the people are slaves, and the nobles are proud and indolent.

The constitution of Poland is the most perfect model of the ancient government of the Goths and Celtæ, which hath been corrected or altered every where else. It is the only state that has preserved the name of republick together with the royal dignity.

Every gentleman has a right to give his vote in the election of a king, and may even be elected himself. This inestimable privilege is attended with inconveniences proportionably great. The throne is almost always exposed to sale; and as a Polander is seldom able to make the purchase, it has frequently been sold to strangers. The nobility and clergy defend their liberties against the king, and deprive the rest of the nation of theirs. The body of the people are slaves. Such is the unhappy fate of mankind, that in every country the greater number are, one way or other, enslaved by the lesser. There the peasant sows not for himself, but for his lord, to whom his person, his lands, and even the labour of his hands belong; and who can sell him, or cut his throat with the same impunity as he kills the beasts in the field. Every gentleman is independent. He cannot be tried in a criminal cause but by an assembly of the whole nation: he cannot be arrested till once he is condemned; so that he is hardly ever punished. There are great numbers of poor among them. These engage in the service of the more wealthy, receive wages from them, and perform the meanest offices. They rather chuse to serve their equals, than to enrich themselves by commerce; and while they are dressing their masters horses, they give themselves

selves the title of electors of kings and destroyers of tyrants.

To see a king of Poland in the pomp of royal majesty, one would take him to be the most absolute prince in Europe; and yet he is the least so. The Poles really make with him that contract, which in other nations is only supposed to be made between the king and the subjects. The king of Poland, even at his consecration, and in swearing to the *Pacta conventa*, absolves his subjects from the oath of allegiance, should he ever violate the laws of the republic.

He nominates to all offices, and confers all honours. Nothing is hereditary in Poland, but the lands and rank of the nobility. The son of a palatine, or of a king, has no claim to the dignity of his father. But there is this great difference betwixt the king and the republic, that the former cannot strip any person of an office after he has bestowed it upon him; whereas the latter may deprive him of the crown, if he transgress the laws of the state.

The nobility, jealous of their liberty, frequently sell their votes, but seldom their affections. They have no sooner elected a king, than they begin to fear his ambition, and to oppose him by their cabals. The grandees whom he has made, and whom he cannot unmake, often become his enemies, instead of remaining his creatures. Those who are attached to the court are hated by the rest of the nobility, which always forms two parties; a division unavoidable, and even necessary in those countries, that must needs have kings, and yet preserve their liberties.

Whatever concerns the nation is regulated in the assemblies of the states-general, which are

called diets. These states are composed of the body of the senate, and of several gentlemen. The senators are the palatines and the bishops: the gentlemen the deputies of the particular diets in each palatinate. In these great assemblies presides the archbishop of Gnesna, primate of Poland, viceroy of the kingdom during an interregnum, and, next to the king, the first person in the state. Besides him there is seldom any other cardinal in Poland; because the Roman purple giving no precedence in the senate a bishop who should be made a cardinal, would be obliged either to take his rank as senator, or to renounce the substantial rights of the dignity he enjoys in his own country, to support the vain pretensions of a foreign honour.

These diets, by the laws of the kingdom, must be held alternately in Poland and Lithuania. The deputies frequently transact their business *fabre* in hand, like the ancient Sarmatians, from whom they are sprung, and sometimes too intoxicated with liquor, a vice to which the Sarmatians were utter strangers. Every gentleman deputed to the states-general enjoys the same right which the tribunes of the people had at Rome, of opposing themselves to the laws of the senate. Any one gentleman, who says, "I protest," stops by that single word, the unanimous resolution of all the rest; and if he quits the place where the diet is held, the assembly is of course dissolved.

To the disorders arising from this law, they apply a remedy still more dangerous. Poland is seldom without two factions. Unanimity in their diets being thus rendered impossible, each party forms confederacies, in which they decide by a plurality of voices, without any regard to the
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protestation of the lesser number. These assemblies, condemned by the laws, but authorised by custom, are held in the king's name, though frequently without his consent, and even against his interest; in much the same manner as the league in France made use of the name of Henry III. to ruin him; and as the parliament in England, that brought Charles I. to the block, began by prefixing his majesty's name to all the resolutions they took to destroy him. When the public commotions are ended, it belongs to the general diets either to confirm or repeal the acts of these confederacies. A diet can even cancel the acts of a former diet; for the same reason that in absolute monarchies a king can abolish the laws of his predecessor, or even those which have been made by himself.

The nobility, who make the laws of the republic, likewise constitute its strength. They appear on horseback, completely armed, upon great emergencies, and are able to make up a body of an hundred thousand men. This great army, which is called *pospolite*, moves slowly, and is ill governed. It cannot continue assembled for any length of time, for want of provisions and forage: it has neither discipline, subordination, nor experience; but that love of liberty by which it is animated will always make it formidable.

These nobles may be conquered, or dispersed, or even held in subjection for a time; but they soon shake off the yoke. They compare themselves to the reeds, which the storm may bend to the ground, but which rise again the moment the storm is over. It is for this reason that they have no places of strength: they will have themselves to be the only bulwarks of the republic;

lick, nor do they ever suffer their king to build any forts, lest he should employ them less for their defence than their oppression. Their country is intirely open, excepting two or three frontier places; so that if in a war, whether civil or foreign, they resolve to sustain a siege, they are obliged to raise fortifications of earth, in a hurry, to repair the old walls that are half ruined, and to enlarge the ditches that are almost filled up; and the town is commonly taken before the entrenchments are finished.

The pospolite are not always on horseback to defend the country: they never mount but by order of the diets, or sometimes in imminent dangers, by the simple order of the king.

The usual guard of Poland is an army, which ought to be maintained at the expence of the republic. It is composed of two bodies, under two grand generals. The first body is that of Poland, and should consist of thirty-six thousand men; the second, to the number of twelve thousand, is that of Lithuania. The two grand generals are independent of each other: though nominated by the king, they are accountable for their conduct to the republic alone, and have an unlimited power over their troops. The colonels are absolute masters of their regiments; and it is their business to maintain and pay them as well as they can. But as they are seldom paid themselves, they ravage the country, ruin the peasants, to satisfy their own avidity, and that of their soldiers. The Polish lords appear in these armies with more magnificence than they do in the towns; and their tents are more elegant than their houses. The cavalry, which makes up two thirds of the army, is composed almost entirely of gentlemen; and is

remarkable for the beauty of their horses, and the richness of the accoutrements and harness.

The gendarmes especially, whom they distinguish into hussars and pancernes, never march without several valets in their retinue, who lead their horses; those are furnished with bridles that are ornamented with plates and nails of silver, embroidered saddles, saddle bows, and gilt stirrups, or stirrups made of massy silver, with large housings trailing on the ground, after the manner of the Turks, whose magnificence the Poles endeavour to imitate as much as they can.

But if the cavalry are fine and gorgeous, the infantry were at that time proportionably wretched, ill clothed, and ill armed, without regimentals, or any thing uniform. Such at least was their condition, till towards the year 1710: and yet these infantry, who resemble the wandering Tartars, support hunger, cold, fatigue, and all the hardships of war with surprising resolution.

One may still discern in the Polish soldiers the character of their ancestors, the ancient Sarmatians, the same want of discipline, the same fury in the assault, the same readiness to fly and to return to the charge, and the same cruel disposition to slaughter when they conquer.

The king of Poland flattered himself at first, that in this pressing necessity, these two bodies would support his cause; that the Polish *pospolite* would take up arms at his orders; and that these forces, joined to the Saxon subjects, and to his Russian allies, would compose an army, before which the small number of the Swedes would not dare to appear. But he found himself, almost in an instant, deprived of these succours by means of that very eagerness he discovered to have them all at once.

Accustomed, in his hereditary dominions, to the exercise of absolute power, he too fondly imagined that he might govern in Poland as he did in Saxony. The beginning of his reign raised malecontents. His first proceedings provoked the party that had opposed his election, and alienated almost all the rest of the nation. The Poles murmured to see the towns filled with Saxon garrisons, and their frontiers lined with Saxon troops. This nation, more anxious to preserve its liberty, than to attack its neighbours, considered the war with Sweden, and the irruption into Livonia, as enterprizes by no means advantageous to the republic. It is very difficult to hinder a free people from seeing their true interest. The Poles were sensible, that if this war, undertaken without their consent, should prove unsuccessful, their country open on all sides, would become a prey to the king of Sweden; and that should it be crowned with success, they would be enslaved by their own king, who being master of Livonia, as well as of Saxony, would shut up Poland between these two states. In this alternative, either of becoming slaves to the king, whom they had elected, or of being pillaged by Charles XII. who was justly incensed, they raised a clamour against the war, which they believed to be declared rather against themselves than against Sweden. They considered the Saxons and the Muscovites as the forgers of their chains; and observing soon after that the king of Sweden had overcome every thing that opposed his progress, and was advancing with a victorious army into the heart of Lithuania, they loudly exclaimed against their sovereign, and with so much the greater freedom as he was unfortunate.

Lithuania was at that time divided into two parties, that of the princes of Sapieha, and that of Oginsky. The animosity between these two factions, occasioned at first by private quarrels, had at last been inflamed into a civil war. The king of Sweden engaged the princes of Sapieha in his interest; and Oginsky being poorly supported by the Saxons, found his party almost annihilated. The Lithuanian army, reduced by these troubles and the want of money to an inconsiderable number, was partly dispersed by the conquerors. The few that still held out for the king of Poland were separated into small bodies of fugitive troops, who wandered up and down the country, and subsisted by spoil. Augustus beheld nothing in Lithuania but the weakness of his own party, the hatred of his subjects, and an hostile army, conducted by a young king, incensed, victorious, and implacable.

There was indeed an army in Poland; but instead of six and thirty thousand men, the number prescribed by the law, it did not amount to eighteen thousand; and it was not only ill-paid and ill-armed, but the generals were as yet undetermined what course to take.

The only resource of the king was, to order the nobility to follow him; but he durst not expose himself to the mortification of a refusal, which, by discovering his weakness too plainly, would of consequence have encreased it.

In this state of trouble and uncertainty, all the palatinates of the kingdom desired the king to call a diet; in the same manner as in England, during times of danger, all the bodies of the state present addresses to the sovereign, entreating him to convoke a parliament. Augustus had more

need

need of an army than a diet, in which the actions of kings are severely canvassed. However, that he might not incense the nation beyond a possibility of reconciliation, he found it necessary to assemble a diet; which was accordingly appointed to be held at Warsaw, on the second of December 1701. He soon perceived that Charles XII. had, at least, as much power in this assembly as himself. Those who favoured the Sapiéha, the Lubomirsky and their friends, the palatine Leczinsky, treasurer of the crown, and especially the partizans of the princes Sobiesky, were all of them secretly attached to the king of Sweden.

The most considerable of these partizans, and the most dangerous to the king of Poland, was cardinal Radjousky, archbishop of Gnesna, primate of the kingdom, and president of the diet. He was a man full of artifice and cunning, and entirely under the influence of an ambitious woman, who was called by the Swedes madam Cardinalefs, and who was egging him on to intrigue and faction. King John Sobiesky, the predecessor of Augustus, had first made him bishop of Warmia and vice-chancellor of the kingdom. Radjousky, when no more than a bishop, had obtained the cardinal's hat by the favour of the same prince. This dignity soon opened his way to the primacy; and thus by uniting in his own person whatever can impose upon mankind, he was able to undertake the most arduous enterprises, without incurring the least danger.

After the death of John, he employed all his interest to raise prince James Sobiesky to the throne; but the torrent of public hatred ran so strong against the father, notwithstanding the eminent qualities of which he was possessed, that it

entirely excluded the son from that dignity. After this, the cardinal-primate joined his endeavours with those of the abbé de Polignac, the French ambassador, to procure the crown to the prince of Conti, who was actually elected. But the money and troops of Saxony defeated all his negotiations. At last he suffered himself to be drawn over to the party that crowned the elector of Saxony, and patiently waited for an opportunity of sowing dissention between the new king and the nation.

The victories of Charles XII. the protector of prince James Sobiesky, the civil war in Lithuania, the general alienation of men's minds from king Augustus; all these circumstances made the cardinal-primate believe, that the time was now come when he might safely send back Augustus into Saxony, and open for king John's son the way to the throne. This prince, formerly the innocent object of the hatred of the Poles, was now become their darling, ever since the time that Augustus had lost the public favour; but he durst not as yet entertain the most distant hopes of so great a revolution, of which, however, the cardinal was already laying the foundation.

At first he seemed desirous of effecting a reconciliation between the king and the republic; and dispatched circular letters, dictated in appearance by the spirit of charity and concord; a common and well known snare, in which, however, the people are always caught. He wrote an affecting letter to the king of Sweden, conjuring him, in the name of that Saviour whom all Christians adore, to give peace to Poland and her king. Charles XII. answered the intentions of the car-

dinal rather than his words. Mean while he remained with his victorious army in the great dutchy of Lithuania, declaring, that he would not disturb the diet; that he made war against Augustus and the Saxons, and not against the Poles; and that, far from attacking, he came only to deliver them from oppression. These letters and these answers were calculated for the public. The emissaries that were continually going and coming between the cardinal and count Piper, and the secret meetings held at the prelate's house, were the springs that regulated the motions of the diet. They proposed to dispatch an embassy to Charles XII. and uananimously required of the king, that he should bring no more Muscovites upon their frontiers, and that he should send back his Saxon troops.

The bad fortune of Augustus had already done what the diet demanded of him. The league secretly concluded with the Muscovites at Birsén, was now become as usefess as it had once appeared formidable. He was far from being able to send to the czar the fifty thousand Germans, whom he had promised to raise in the empire. The czar himself, a dangerous neighbour to Poland, was in no haste to assist a divided kingdom, from whose misfortunes he hoped to derive some advantage. He contented himself with sending twenty thousand Muscovites into Lithuania, who did more mischief than the Swedes, flying every where before the conqueror, and ravaging the lands of the Poles; till at last being pursued by the Swedish generals, and finding no more to pillage, they returned in shoals to their own country. With regard to the shattered remains of the Saxon

Saxon army that was beat at Riga; Augustus sent them to winter and recruit in Saxony; hoping by this sacrifice, involuntary as it was, to regain the affection of the Poles, who were so highly incensed against him.

The war now was turned into intrigues. The diet was split into almost as many factions as there were palatines. One day the interests of king Augustus prevailed; the next they were disregarded. Every one called out for liberty and justice; and yet no one knew what was liberty and justice. The time was spent in private cabals and public harangues. The diet neither knew what they would be at, nor what they ought to do. Great companies seldom steer the right course in times of public commotions; because the factious are bold, and the virtuous are commonly diffident. The diet broke up in a tumultuous manner, on the 17th of February 1702, after having spent three months in cabals, without coming to any fixed resolution. The senators, consisting of the palatines and bishops, remained at Warsaw. The senate of Poland has a right of making laws provisionally, which the diets seldom disannul. This body being less numerous, and accustomed to business, was far less tumultuous, and decided with greater dispatch.

They decreed that the embassy, which was proposed in the diet, should be sent to the king of Sweden; and that the pospolite should take to arms, and hold themselves in readiness at all events. They made several regulations for quelling the commotions in Lithuania, and for diminishing the authority of the king, though less to be dreaded than that of Charles XII.

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Augustus rather chose to receive hard laws from his conqueror than from his subjects. He resolved to sue for a peace to the king of Sweden, and to conclude a secret treaty with that monarch. This was a step which he was obliged to conceal from the senate, whom he considered as an enemy still more untractable than Charles. As the affair was of a very delicate nature, he entrusted it to the countess of Konigsmark, a Swedish lady of high birth, to whom he was at that time attached. This is the lady whose brother became so famous by his unfortunate death, and whose son commanded the French armies with so much glory and success. Celebrated as she was for her wit and beauty, she was more capable than any minister of bringing a negociation to a happy period. Moreover, as she had an estate in the dominions of Charles XII. and had resided a long time at his court, she had a very plausible pretext for waiting upon him. Accordingly she repaired to the Swedish camp in Lithuania, and immediately applied to count Piper, who too rashly promised her an audience of his master. The countess, among those perfections which rendered her the most amiable woman in Europe, possessed the happy talent of speaking the languages of several countries she had never seen, with as much ease and propriety as if she had been a native. She even amused herself sometimes in writing French verses, which one might have easily mistaken for the production of a person born at Versailles. Those which she composed on Charles XII. are not beneath the dignity of history to mention. She introduced the heathen gods praising him for his different virtues. The piece concluded thus :

Ensa,

*Enfin, chacun des Dieux discourant à sa gloire,
Le plaçait par avance au Temple de Mémoire;
Mais Venus ni Bacchus n'en dirent pas un mot.*

The hero's acts while other gods proclaim,
And praise, and promise him immortal fame ;
Silent sit Bacchus and the queen of love.

All her wit and charms were lost upon such a man as the king of Sweden, who constantly refused to see her. She therefore resolved to throw herself in his way, as he rode out to take the air, which he frequently did. In this attempt she at last succeeded. She met him one day in a very narrow path ; and the moment she observed him, came down from her coach. The king made her a low bow, without speaking a word to her, turned about his horse, and rode back in an instant. And thus the only advantage which the countess of Konigsmark gained from her journey was the pleasure of seeing that the king of Sweden feared nobody but her.

The king of Poland was therefore obliged to throw himself into the arms of the senate. He made them two proposals, which were laid before them by the palatine of Marienburg; the one, that they should leave to him the disposal of the republic, in which case he would engage to pay the soldiers two quarters advance out of his own revenue; the other, that they should allow him to bring back twelve thousand Saxons into Poland. The cardinal primate returned him an answer as severe as the king of Sweden's refusal. He told the palatine of Marienburg, in the name of the assembly, " That they had resolved to send

an embassy to Charles XII. and that he would not advise him to bring back any Saxons."

In this extremity, the king was desirous of preserving at least the appearance of the royal authority. He sent one of his chamberlains to wait upon Charles, and to learn from him where, and in what manner, his Swedish majesty would be pleased to receive the embassy of the king his master, and of the republic. Unhappily they had forgot to ask from the Swedes a passport for the chamberlain. The king of Sweden, instead of giving him an audience, caused him to be thrown into prison, saying, "That he expected to receive an embassy from the republic, and not from Augustus."

After this, Charles having left garrisons in some towns in Lithuania, advanced beyond Grodno, a city well known in Europe for the diets that are held there, but ill built, and worse fortified.

A few miles on the other side of Grodno, he met the embassy of the republic, which consisted of five senators. They desired, in the first place, to have the ceremony of their introduction properly regulated, a thing with which the king was utterly unacquainted. They demanded, that the senate should be complimented with the title of Most Serene, and that the coaches of the king and senators should be sent to meet them. They were told in answer, "That the republic should be stiled Illustrious, and not Most Serene; that the king never used any coaches; that he had plenty of officers in his retinue, but no senators; that a lieutenant-general should be sent to meet them; and that they might come on their own horses."

Charles

Charles XII. received them in his tent, with some appearance of military grandeur. Their conversation was full of caution and reserve. They said they were afraid of Charles XII. and did not love Augustus; but that it would be a shame for them to take the crown, in obedience to the orders of a stranger, from the head of that prince whom they had elected. Nothing was finally concluded; and Charles XII. gave them to understand, that he would settle all disputes at Warsaw.

His march was preceded by a manifesto, which the cardinal and his party spread over Poland in the space of eight days. By this writing, Charles invited all the Poles to join him in revenging their own quarrel, and endeavoured to persuade them that his interest and theirs were the same. They were, however, very different; but the manifesto, supported by a powerful army, by the disorder of the senate, and by the approach of the conqueror, made a deep impression on the minds of the people. They were obliged to own Charles for their protector, because he was resolved to be so; and happy was it for them, that he contented himself with this title.

The senators who opposed Augustus published this manifesto aloud, even in the royal presence. The few who adhered to him observed a profound silence. At length, intelligence being brought that Charles was advancing by long marches, every one prepared to depart in a hurry. The cardinal left Warsaw among the first. The greatest part fled with precipitation; some retired to their country-seats, there to wait the unravelling of this perplexed and intricate affair; others went to arm their friends. Nobody remained with the king but
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the ambassadors of the emperor and the czar, the pope's nuncio, and a few bishops and palatines who were attached to his fortunes. He was forced to fly, though nothing as yet decided in his favour. Before his departure, he hastened to hold a council with the small body of senators who still represented the senate. Zealous as these were for his interest, they were nevertheless Poles; they had all conceived such an utter aversion to the Saxon troops, that they durst not grant him a liberty of recalling more than six thousand of them for his defence; and they even voted that these six thousand should be commanded by the grand general of Poland, and be immediately sent back upon the conclusion of a peace. The armies of the republic they left entirely to his disposal.

After this decree of the senate, the king left Warsaw, too weak to resist his enemies, and but little satisfied even with the conduct of his friends. He immediately published orders for assembling the *pospolite* and the two armies, which were little more than empty names. He had nothing to hope for in Lithuania, of which the Swedes were in possession. The army of Poland, reduced to an handful of men, was in want of arms and provisions, and had no great inclination to the war. Most of the nobility, intimidated, irresolute, and disaffected, remained at their country-seats. In vain did the king, authorized by the laws of the land, command every gentleman, under pain of death, to take up arms and follow him. It was even become a problematical point whether or not they ought to obey him. His chief dependence was upon the troops of the electorate, where the form of government being wholly despotic, he was under no apprehensions of being disobeyed. He had already given

secret orders for the march of twelve thousand Saxons, who were advancing with great expedition. He likewise recalled the eight thousand men whom he had promised to the emperor in his war against France, and whom the necessity of his affairs now obliged him to withdraw. To introduce so many Saxons into Poland, was, in effect, to alienate the affections of all his subjects, and to violate the law made by his own party, which allowed only of six thousand. But he well knew, that, if he proved victorious, they would not dare to complain, and if he should be conquered, they would never forgive him for having introduced even the six thousand. While the soldiers were arriving in troops, and while he was flying from one palatinate to another, and assembling the nobility who adhered to him, the king of Sweden reached Warsaw, on the 5th of May, 1702. The gates were opened to him at the first summons. He dismissed the Polish garrison, disbanded the city-guard, posted guards of his own in all the convenient places, and ordered the inhabitants to deliver up their arms. Satisfied with having disarmed them, and unwilling to provoke them by any unnecessary severities, he demanded a contribution of no more than one hundred thousand livres. Augustus was then assembling his forces at Cracow, and was greatly surprised to see the cardinal-primate arrive among the rest. This man affected to maintain the decorum of his character to the last, and to dethrone his king with all the appearance of the most respectful behaviour. He gave him to understand that the king of Sweden seemed very well inclined to come to a reasonable accommodation, and humbly begged leave to wait upon that monarch. Augustus granted

granted him what he could not refuse, that is, the liberty of hurting himself.

The cardinal-primate immediately repaired to the king of Sweden, before whom he had not as yet ventured to appear. He saw him at Praag, not far from Warsaw, but without any of those ceremonies which had been observed in introducing the ambassadors of the republic. He found the conqueror clad in a coat of coarse blue cloth, with gilt brass buttons, jack-boots, and buff-skin gloves that reached up to his elbows. He was in a room without hangings, attended by the duke of Holstein, count Piper his first minister, and several general officers. The king advanced a few steps to meet the cardinal; they talked together standing for about a quarter of an hour; Charles put an end to the conference, by saying aloud, "I will never give the Poles peace, till they have elected a new king." The cardinal, who expected such a declaration, caused it to be immediately notified to all the palatinates, assuring them that he was extremely sorry for it, but represented to them, at the same time, the absolute necessity they were under of complying with the conqueror's request.

Upon receiving this intelligence, the king of Poland plainly perceived that he must either lose his crown, or preserve it by a battle; and he exerted his utmost efforts in order to succeed in the decision of this important quarrel. All his Saxon troops were arrived from the frontiers of Saxony. The nobility of the palatinate of Cracow, where he still remained, came in a body to offer him their service. He exhorted them to remember the oaths they had taken; and they promised to shed the last drop of their blood in support

port of his cause. Strengthened by these succours, and by the troops which bore the name of the army of the crown, he went, for the first time, in quest of the king of Sweden; nor was he long in finding him; for that prince was already advancing towards Cracow.

The two kings met on the 13th of July 1702, in a spacious plain near Clissau, between Warsaw and Cracow. Augustus had near four and twenty thousand men; Charles XII. had not above twelve thousand. The battle began by a general discharge of the artillery. At the first volley of the Saxons, the duke of Holstein, who commanded the Swedish cavalry, a young prince of great courage and virtue, received a cannon-ball in his reins. The king asked if he was killed, and was answered in the affirmative. He made no reply: a few tears fell from his eyes: he covered his face with his hands for a moment; and then, of a sudden, spurring on his horse with all his might, he rushed into the thickest of the enemy at the head of the guards.

The king of Poland did every thing that could be expected from a prince who fought for his crown. Thrice in person did he rally his troops, and lead them up to the charge; but the Saxons only could be said to fight for him: the Poles, who formed his right wing, fled to a man, at the very beginning of the battle; some through fear, and others thro' disaffection. The good fortune of Charles XII. carried all before it; he gained a complete victory. He took possession of the enemy's camp, their colours, and artillery; and Augustus's military-chest fell into his hands. He halted not a moment on the field of battle, but marched directly

directly to Cracow, pursuing the king of Poland, who fled before him.

The citizens of Cracow were bold enough to shut the gates upon the conqueror. He caused them to be burst open. The garrison did not venture to fire a single gun; but were driven with whips and canes into the castle, into which the king entered pell-mell with them. Charles observing an officer of the artillery going to fire a cannon, ran up to him and snatched the match out of his hand. The commander fell on his knees before him. Three Swedish regiments were lodged at free quarters among the citizens, and the town was taxed with a contribution of an hundred thousand rix-dollars. The count de Steinbock, who was appointed governor of the city, being informed that some treasures were hid in the tombs of the Polish kings, in St. Nicholas church at Cracow, caused them to be opened. Nothing was found there but some ornaments of gold and silver, belonging to the churches. Of these he took a part; and Charles XII. even sent a golden cup to one of the Swedish churches; an action that might have raised the Polish catholics against him, had any thing been able to withstand the terror of his arms.

He left Cracow with a determined resolution to pursue Augustus without intermission. At the distance of a few miles from the city, his horse fell and broke his thigh-bone. They were obliged to carry him back to Cracow, where he remained confined to his bed for six weeks, in the hands of the surgeons. This accident gave Augustus a little respite. He forthwith caused it to be spread abroad thro' Poland and Germany, that Charles XII. was killed by the fall. This report, which

which gained credit for some time, filled the minds of all men with doubt and apprehension. During this interval, he assembled at Marienburg, and then at Lublin, all the orders of the kingdom, which had been already convoked at Sendomir. The assembly was very full, as few palatinates refused to send their deputies thither. He regained the affections of most of them by presents and promises, and by that affability without which absolute kings cannot be beloved, nor elective kings maintain themselves on the throne. The diet were soon undeceived concerning the false report of the king of Sweden's death; but that large body was already put in motion, and suffered itself to be carried along by the impulse it had received; all the members swore to continue faithful to their sovereign: so subject to change are all great companies! Even the cardinal-primate himself, who still pretended a regard for Augustus, repaired to the diet of Lublin; where he kissed the king's hand, and readily took the oath as well as the other members. The substance of the oath was, that they had never attempted, nor ever would attempt, any thing prejudicial to the interest of Augustus. The king excused the cardinal from the first part of the oath, and the prelate blushed while he swore to the last. The result of all the deliberations of this diet was, that the republic of Poland should maintain an army of fifty thousand men at their own expence, for the service of their sovereign; that they should allow the Swedes six weeks time to declare whether they were for peace or war; and the same time to the princes of Sapiaha, the original authors of the troubles in Lithuania, to come and ask pardon from the king of Poland.

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In the mean time Charles XII. being cured of his wound, overturned all their deliberations. Unalterably fixt in his resolution of forcing the Poles to dethrone their king with their own hands, he caused a new assembly to be convoked at Warsaw, by the intrigues of the cardinal, in opposition to that of Lublin. His generals represented to him, that this negociation might possibly be involved in endless delays, and by that means be rendered ineffectual; that, in the mean time, the Muscovites were every day becoming a more equal match for the troops which he had left in Livonia and Ingria; that the skirmishes which frequently happened between the Swedes and Russians in these provinces did not always turn out to the advantage of the former; and, finally, that his own presence might soon be necessary in those quarters. Charles, as steady in the prosecution of his schemes, as he was brisk and vigorous in action, replied; "Should it oblige me to remain here for fifty years, I will not depart till I have dethroned the king of Poland."

He left the assembly of Warsaw to combat that of Lublin, by their speeches and writings, and to justify their proceedings by the laws of the kingdom; laws always equivocal, which each party interpret according to their pleasure, and which success alone can render incontestable. As for himself, having reinforced his victorious troops with six thousand horse and eight thousand foot, which he had received from Sweden, he marched against the remains of the Saxon army, which he had beat at Clissa, and which had found time to rally and recruit, while his fall from his horse had confined him to his bed. This army shunned his approach, and retired towards Prussia, to the

north-west of Warsaw. The river Bug lay between him and the enemy. Charles swam across it at the head of his cavalry: the infantry went to look for a ford somewhat higher. He came up with the Saxons on the first of May 1703, at a place called Pultesk. General Stenau commanded them to the number of about ten thousand. The king of Sweden, in his precipitate march, had brought no more than the same number along with him, confident that a less number would be sufficient. So great was the terror of his arms, that one half of the Saxon troops fled at his approach, without waiting for the battle. General Stenau, with two regiments, kept his ground for a moment; but was soon hurried along in the general flight of his army, which was dispersed before it was vanquished. The Swedes did not take above a thousand prisoners, nor kill above six hundred men, having more difficulty in pursuing than in defeating the enemy.

Augustus having now nothing left him but the shattered remains of his Saxons, who were every where defeated, retired in haste to Thorn, an ancient city of Royal Prussia, situated on the Vistula, and under the protection of the Poles. Charles immediately prepared to besiege it. The king of Poland, not thinking himself secure in this place, withdrew from it, and flew into every corner of Poland, where he could possibly find any soldiers, and into which the Swedes had not as yet penetrated. Mean while Charles, amidst so many rapid marches, swimming across rivers, and hurried along with his infantry mounted behind his cavalry, had not been able to bring up his cannon to Thorn; he was therefore obliged to wait till

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a train

a train of artillery should be brought from Sweden by sea.

While he tarried here, he fixed his quarters at the distance of a few miles from the city, in reconnoitring which he frequently approached too near the ramparts. In these dangerous excursions, the plain dress which he wore was of greater service to him than he imagined, as it prevented his being distinguished and marked out by the enemy, who would not have failed to fire upon him. One day, having advanced too near the fortifications, attended by one of his generals called Lieven, who was dressed in a blue-coat * trimmed with gold, and fearing lest the general should be too easily distinguished, he ordered him to walk behind him. To this he was prompted by that greatness of soul which was so natural to him, that it even prevented his reflecting on the imminent danger to which he exposed his own life, in order to preserve that of his subject. Lieven perceiving his error too late, in having put on a remarkable dress, which endangered all those who were near him, and being equally concerned for the king where-ever he was, hesitated for a moment whether or not he should obey him. In the midst of this contest, the king takes him by the arm, puts himself before him, and screens him with his body. At that instant, a cannon-ball taking them in flank, struck the general dead upon the very spot which the king had hardly quitted. The death of this man, killed exactly

* In the former editions we gave this officer a scarlet coat; but the chaplain Norberg hath so incontestibly proved it to have been a blue one, that we have thought proper to correct the error.

in his stead, and because he had endeavoured to save him, contributed not a little to confirm him in the opinion, which he always entertained, of absolute predetermination; and made him believe that his fate, which had preserved him in such a singular manner, reserved him for the execution of greater undertakings.

Every thing succeeded with him: his negotiations and his arms were equally fortunate. He was present, as it were, in every part of Poland. His grand general Renschild was in the heart of the kingdom with a large body of troops. About thirty thousand Swedes, under different generals, were posted towards the north and east upon the frontiers of Muscovy, and withstood the united efforts of the whole Russian empire; and Charles was in the west, at the other end of Poland, with the flower of his army.

The king of Denmark, tied up by the treaty of Travendal, which his weakness had hindered him from breaking, remained quiet. That prudent monarch did not venture to discover the disgust he felt at seeing the king of Sweden so near his dominions. At a greater distance towards the south-west, between the rivers Elbe and Weser, lay the dutchy of Bremen, the most remote of all the ancient conquests of the Swedes. This country was filled with strong garrisons, and opened to the conqueror a free passage into Saxony and the empire. Thus, from the German Ocean almost to the mouth of the Boristhenes, comprehending the whole breadth of Europe, and even to the gates of Moscow, all was in consternation; and every one was daily expecting a general revolution. Charles's ships, which were now masters of the Baltick, were employed in transporting to

Sweden the prisoners he had taken in Poland. Sweden, undisturbed in the midst of these mighty commotions, enjoyed the sweets of peace, and shared in the glory of its king, without bearing the burden of the war; inasmuch as its victorious troops were paid and maintained at the expence of the conquered.

While all the northern powers were thus kept in awe by the arms of Charles XII. the town of Dantzick ventured to incur his displeasure. Fourteen frigates and forty transports were bringing the king a reinforcement of six thousand men, with cannon and ammunition, to form the siege of Thorn. These succours must necessarily pass up the Weiffel. At the mouth of this river stands Danzick, a free and wealthy town, which, together with Thorn and Elbing, enjoys the same privileges in Poland as the imperial towns possess in Germany. Its liberty hath been alternately attacked by the Danes, the Swedes, and some German princes; and nothing hath preserved it from bondage but the mutual jealousy of these rival powers. Count Steinbock, one of the Swedish generals, assembled the magistrates in the king's name, and demanded a passage for the troops and ammunition. The magistrates were guilty of a piece of imprudence very common with those who treat with people more powerful than themselves; they durst neither refuse nor grant his demands. General Steinbock obliged them to grant more than he had at first demanded. He exacted from the city a contribution of an hundred thousand crowns, as a punishment for their imprudent refusal. At last the recruits, the cannon, and ammunition, being arrived before Thorn, the siege was begun on the 22d of September.

Robel,

Robel, governor of the place, defended it for a month with a garrison of five thousand men. At the expiration of that term he was obliged to surrender at discretion. The garrison were made prisoners of war, and transported to Sweden. Robel was presented to the king unarmed. That prince, who never lost an opportunity of honouring merit in his enemies, gave him a sword with his own hand, made him a handsome present in money, and dismissed him on his parole. But the poor and paupery town was condemned to pay forty thousand crowns; an excessive contribution for such a place.

Elbing, built on an arm of the Weiffel, founded by the Teutonic knights, and annexed likewise to Poland, did not profit by the misconduct of the Dantzickers, but hesitated too long about granting a passage to the Swedish troops. It was more severely punished than Dantzick. On the 13th of December Charles entered it at the head of four thousand men, with bayonets fixed to the ends of their muskets. The inhabitants, struck with terror, fell upon their knees in the streets, and begged for mercy. He caused them all to be disarmed; quartered his soldiers upon them; and then having assembled the magistrates, exacted that same day a contribution of two hundred and sixty thousand crowns. There were in the town two hundred pieces of cannon and four hundred thousand weight of powder, which he likewise seized. A battle gained would not have procured him so many advantages. All these successes paved the way for the dethroning of Augustus.

Hardly had the cardinal taken an oath that he would make no attempts against his sovereign, when he repaired to the assembly of Warsaw, al-

ways under the specious pretence of peace. When he arrived there he talked of nothing but obedience and concord, though he was accompanied by a number of soldiers whom he had raised on his own estate. At last he threw off the mask; and, on the 14th of February 1704, declared, in the name of the assembly, "That Augustus, elector of Saxony, was incapable of wearing the crown of Poland." All the members with one voice pronounced the throne to be vacant. It was the intention of the king of Sweden, and consequently of the diet, to raise prince James Sobieski to the throne of king John his father. James Sobieski was then at Breslaw in Silesia, waiting with impatience for the crown which his father had worn. While he was one day a-hunting a few leagues from Breslaw, in company with prince Constantine, one of his brothers, thirty Saxon horsemen, sent privately by king Augustus, issued suddenly from a neighbouring wood, surrounded the two princes, and carried them off without resistance. They had prepared fresh horses, upon which they conducted them to Leipfick, and committed them to close custody. This stroke disconcerted the measures of Charles, the cardinal, and the assembly of Warsaw.

Fortune, which sports herself with crowned heads, exposed Augustus, almost at the same time, to the danger of being taken himself. He was at table, three leagues from Cracow, relying upon an advanced guard which was posted at some distance, when, all of a sudden, general Renschild appeared, after having carried off the guard. The king of Poland had but just time to get on horseback, with ten others. General Renschild pursued him for four days, just upon
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the point of seizing him every moment. The king fled to Sendomir: the Swedish general pursued him thither; and it was only by a piece of good fortune that he made his escape.

Mean while the king's party and that of the cardinal treated each other as traitors to their country. The army of the crown was divided between the two factions. Augustus, being at last obliged to accept of assistance from the Russians, was sorry that he had not applied to them sooner. One while he flew into Saxony, where his resources were exhausted; at another he returned to Poland, where no one durst serve him; while in the mean time the king of Sweden, victorious and unmolested, ruled in Poland with uncontrouled authority.

Count Piper, who was as great a politician as his master was a hero, advised Charles XII. to take the crown of Poland to himself. He represented how easy it would be to accomplish such a scheme with a victorious army, and a powerful party in the heart of the kingdom, which was already subdued. He tempted him with the title of "Defender of the Evangelick Religion;" a name which flattered the ambition of Charles. It would be easy, he said, to effect in Poland what Gustavus Vasa had effected in Sweden; to establish the Lutheran religion, and to break the chains of the people, who were now held in slavery by the nobility and clergy. Charles yielded to the temptation for a moment; but glory was his idol. To it he sacrificed his own interest, and the pleasure he would have enjoyed in taking Poland from the pope. He told count Piper, that he was much happier in bestowing than in gaining kingdoms; and added with a smile, "You
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were

were 'made to be the minister of an Italian prince."

Charles was still near Thorn, in that part of Royal Prussia which belongs to Poland. From thence he extended his views to what was passing at Warsaw, and kept all the neighbouring powers in awe. Prince Alexander, brother of the two Sobieskis who were carried into Silesia, came to implore his aid in revenging his wrongs. Charles granted his desire the more readily, as he thought he could easily gratify it, and that, at the same time, he should be avenging himself. But being extremely desirous of giving Poland a king, he advised prince Alexander to mount the throne, from which fortune seemed determined to exclude his brother. Little did he expect a refusal. Prince Alexander told him that nothing should ever induce him to make an advantage of his elder brother's misfortune. The king of Sweden, count Piper, all his friends, and especially the young palatine of Posnania, Stanislaus Leczinsky, pressed him to accept of the crown; but he remained unmoved by all their importunities. The neighbouring princes were astonished to hear of this uncommon refusal; and knew not which to admire most: a king of Sweden, who, at twenty-two years of age, gave away the crown of Poland, or prince Alexander, who refused to accept it.

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O F
C H A R L E S X I I .
K I N G o f S W E D E N .

B O O K I I I .

T H E C O N T E N T S .

STANISLAUS LECZINSKY elected King of POLAND. Death of the Cardinal-primate. Skilful Retreat of General SCHULLEMBURG. Exploits of the Czar. Foundation of PETERSBURG. Battle of FRAVENSTAD. CHARLES enters SAXONY. Peace of ALBANSTADT. AUGUSTUS abdicates the Crown in Favour of STANISLAUS. General PATKUL, the Czar's Plenipotentiary, is broke upon the Wheel and quartered. CHARLES receives the Ambassadors of foreign Princes in SAXONY: And goes to DRESDEN to visit AUGUSTUS before his Departure.

YOUNG Stanislaus Leczinsky was then deputed by the assembly of Warsaw to go to the king of Sweden and give him an account of several differences which had arisen among them, since the time that prince James was carried off. Stanislaus had a very engaging aspect, full of cou-

rage and sweetness, with an air of probity and frankness, which, of all external advantages, is certainly the greatest, and gives more weight to words than even eloquence itself. Charles was surprised to hear him talk with so much judgment of Augustus, the assembly, the cardinal-primate, and the different interests that divided Europe. King Stanislaus did me the honour to inform me, that he said to the king of Sweden in Latin, "How can we elect a king, if the two princes, James and Constantine Sobieski, are held in captivity?" and that Charles replied, "How can we deliver the republic if we don't elect a king?" This conversation was the only intrigue that placed Stanislaus on the throne. Charles prolonged the conversation, on purpose that he might the better sound the genius of the young deputy. After the audience, he said aloud, that he had not seen a man so fit to reconcile all parties. He immediately made inquiry into the character of the palatine Leczinsky, and found that he was a man of great courage and inured to labour; that he always lay on a kind of straw mattress, requiring no service from his domestics; that he was temperate to a degree rarely known in that climate; liberal with oeconomy; adored by his vassals; and perhaps the only lord in Poland who had any friends, at a time when men acknowledged no ties but those of interest and faction. This character, which in many particulars resembled his own, determined him entirely. After the conference he said aloud, "There is the man that shall always be my friend." The meaning of which words was soon perceived to be, "There is the man that shall be king."

As soon as the primate of Poland understood that Charles XII. had nominated the palatine
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Leczinsky, in much the same manner as Alexander nominated Abdalonimus, he hastened to the king of Sweden, to try if possible to divert him from his resolution ; being desirous that the crown should devolve on one Lubomirsky. " But what have you to object against Stanislaus Leczinsky ?" said the conqueror. " Sir, (said the primate) he is too young." " He is much about my age," replied the king dryly ; and turning his back upon the prelate, immediately dispatched the count de Hoorn, to acquaint the assembly of Warsaw, that they must chuse a king in five days, and that Stanislaus Leczinsky must be the man. The count de Hoorn arrived on the 7th of July, and fixed the 12th for the day of election, with as much ease and indifference as if he had been ordering the decampment of a battalion. The cardinal-primate, disappointed of the fruit of so many intrigues, returned to the assembly, where he left no stone unturned to defeat an election in which he had no share. But the king of Sweden having come incognito to Warsaw, he was obliged to hold his peace. All that the primate could do was to absent himself from the election : unable to oppose the conqueror, and unwilling to assist him, he confined himself to an useless neutrality.

Saturday the 12th of July, the day fixed for the election, being come, the assembly met at three in the afternoon at Colo, the place appointed for the ceremony ; the bishop of Posen acting as president, in the room of the cardinal primate. He came attended by several gentlemen of the party. The count de Hoorn and two other general officers assisted publicly at the solemnity, as ambassadors-extraordinary from Charles to the republic. The session lasted till nine in the even-

ing; and the bishop of Posen put an end to it by declaring, in name of the assembly, that Stanislaus was elected king of Poland. They all threw up their hats into the air, and the shouts of acclamation stifled the cries of the opposers. It was of no service to the cardinal-primate, or to the others who had resolved to continue neuter, that they had absented themselves from the election; they were all obliged next day to come and do homage to the new king: but the greatest mortification to which they were subjected was their being compelled to follow him to the king of Sweden's quarters. Charles paid the sovereign he had made all the honours due to a king of Poland; and, to add the greater weight to his new dignity, he furnished him with a considerable sum of money, and a sufficient number of troops.

Immediately after this, Charles XII. departed from Warsaw, in order to finish the conquest of Poland. He had ordered his army to rendezvous before Leopold, the capital of the great palatinate of Russia, a place important in itself, and still more so on account of the riches which it contained. It was supposed it would hold out for fifteen days, by means of the fortifications with which Augustus had strengthened it. The conqueror sat down before it on the 5th of September, and next day took it by assault. All those who presumed to make resistance were put to the sword. The victorious troops, though masters of the city, did not break their ranks to go a-pillaging, notwithstanding the immense treasures that were said to be concealed in Leopold. They drew up in order of battle in the great square; where the remaining part of the garrison came and surrendered.

rendered themselves prisoners of war. The king published his orders by sound of trumpet, commanding, under pain of death, all the inhabitants, who had any effects belonging to Augustus or his adherents, to produce them before night. The measures he took were so wisely concerted, that few ventured to disobey; and accordingly four hundred chests of gold and silver coin, of plate and other valuable effects, were brought to his majesty.

The Beginning of Stanislaus's reign was distinguished by an event of a very different nature. Some business, which absolutely required his presence, had obliged him to remain at Warsaw. He had with him his mother, his wife, and his two daughters. The cardinal-primate, the bishop of Posen, and some grandees of Poland, composed his new court. It was guarded by six thousand Poles, of the army of the crown, who had lately entered into his service, but whose fidelity had not yet been put to the trial. General Hoorn, governor of the town, had not above fifteen hundred Swedes. The citizens of Warsaw were in a profound tranquillity; and Stanislaus proposed setting out in a few days for the conquest of Leopold; when, all on a sudden, he was informed that a numerous army was approaching the city. This was king Augustus, who, by a fresh effort, and by one of the most dexterous marches that ever general made, had eluded the king of Sweden, and was now coming with twenty thousand men to fall upon Warsaw, and carry off his rival.

Warsaw was unfortified; the Polish troops who defended it were not to be relied on; Augustus held a correspondence with some of the citizens; so that, had Stanislaus remained in it, he must

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certainly have been ruined. He sent back his family into Posnania, under a guard of Polish troops in whom he could most confide. In this confusion he thought he had lost his second daughter, who was about a year old, and who had been carried by her nurse into a neighbouring village, where she was soon after found in a manger; as Stanislaus himself hath since informed me. This is the same child whom fortune, after a variety of the most surprising vicissitudes, at last made queen of France. Several gentlemen took different roads. The new king immediately set out for the camp of Charles XII. learning thus betimes to suffer disgrace, and forced to quit his capital six weeks after he had been advanced to the sovereignty.

Augustus entered the capital like a provoked and victorious sovereign. The inhabitants, already fleeced by the king of Sweden, were entirely ruined by Augustus. The cardinal's palace, and all the houses of the confederate lords, with all their effects both in town and country, were given to plunder. What was most extraordinary in this sudden revolution, the pope's nuncio who attended Augustus demanded in name of his master, that the bishop of Posnania should be delivered into his hands, as subject to the jurisdiction of the court of Rome, both as a bishop and as the favourer of a prince who had been advanced to the throne by the arms of a Lutheran.

The court of Rome, which hath always been endeavouring to encrease its temporal power by means of the spiritual, had, long before this, established a kind of jurisdiction in Poland, at the head of which was the pope's nuncio. Its ministers never failed to avail themselves of every favourable opportunity to extend their power, which

is revered by the multitude, but always contested by men of sense. They claimed a right of judging in all ecclesiastical causes; and in times of trouble had usurped several other privileges, in which they maintained themselves till about the year 1728, when these abuses were corrected; abuses which are never reformed till they are become absolutely intolerable.

Augustus, glad of an opportunity of punishing the bishop of Posen in a decent manner, and willing to gratify the court of Rome, whose pretensions, however, he would have opposed on any other occasion, delivered the Polish prelate into the hands of the nuncio. The bishop, after having seen his house pillaged, was carried by the soldiers to the lodgings of the Italian minister, and from thence sent into Saxony, where he ended his days. Count Hoorn bore the continual fire of the enemy in the castle, where he was shut up, till at last the place being no longer tenable, he surrendered himself with his fifteen hundred Swedes. This was the first advantage which Augustus gained amidst the torrent of his bad fortune, over the victorious arms of his enemy.

This last effort was the blaze of a fire that was just going out. His troops, which had been assembled in haste, consisted either of Poles, ready to forsake him on the first disgrace, or of Saxon recruits, who had never seen a campaign; or of vagabond Cossacks, more fit to distress the conquered than to conquer: and all of them trembled at the bare mention of the king of Sweden's name.

That conqueror, accompanied by Stanislaus, went in quest of his enemy, at the head of his best troops. The Saxon army fled every where before

before him. The towns for thirty miles round sent him the keys of their gates. Not a day passed that was not distinguished by some advantage. Success began to grow too familiar to Charles. He said it was rather like hunting than fighting, and complained that he was not obliged to purchase a victory on harder terms.

Augustus gave the command of his army, for some time, to count Schullemburg, a very able general, and who had need of all his experience at the head of dispirited troops. He was more anxious to preserve his master's troops than to conquer. He acted by stratagem, and the two kings with vigour. He stole some marches upon them, took possession of some advantageous posts, sacrificed a few horse in order to give his infantry time to retire; and thus, by a glorious retreat, saved his troops in the face of an enemy, in contending with whom it was impossible, at that time, to acquire any other kind of glory.

He was scarce arrived in the palatinate of Posenania, when he learned that the two kings, who, he imagined were at the distance of fifty leagues, had marched these fifty leagues in nine hours. He had only eight thousand foot, and a thousand horse; and yet with his handful of men, he was obliged to make head against a superior army, against the name of the king of Sweden, and against that terror with which so many defeats had naturally inspired the Saxons. He had always affirmed, contrary to the opinion of the German generals, that infantry were able to resist cavalry in open field, even without the assistance of chevaux de frize, and he this day ventured to put the matter to the test of experience, against a victorious cavalry commanded by two kings, and by the

the best Swedish generals. He took possession of such an advantageous post, that he could not possibly be surrounded. The soldiers of the first rank, armed with pikes and fuses, bent one knee upon the ground, and standing very close together, presented to the enemy's horse a kind of pointed rampart with pikes and bayonets: the second rank, inclining a little on the shoulders of the first, fired over their heads; and the third, standing upright, fired at the same time, from behind the other two. The Swedes, with their usual impetuosity, rushed upon the Saxons, who waited the assault without flinching: the discharge of the muskets, and the points of the pikes and bayonets maddened the horses, and made them rear instead of advancing. By these means the attack of the Swedes was rendered disorderly; and the Saxons defended themselves by keeping their ranks.

Though he had received five wounds, he drew up his men in an oblong square, and in this form made an orderly retreat about midnight towards the small town of Gurau, three leagues distant from the field of battle. But he had hardly begun to breathe in this place, when the two kings suddenly appeared at his heels.

Beyond Gurau, towards the river Oder, lay a thick wood, by marching through which the Saxon general saved his fatigued infantry. The Swedes, who were not to be checked by such a trivial interruption, pursued them even through the wood, advancing with great difficulty through paths hardly passable by foot travellers; and the Saxons had not crossed the wood above five hours before the Swedish horse. On the other side of the wood runs the river Parts, hard by a village
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called Rutfen. Schullemburg had taken care to send orders for having the boats in readinefs; and he now transported his troops, which were diminished by one half. Charles arrived the very moment that Schullemburg reached the oppofite bank. Never conqueror purfued his enemy with greater celerity. The reputation of Schullemburg depended upon his efcaping from the king of Sweden: the king, on the other hand, thought his glory concerned in taking Schullemburg, and the remains of his army. He loft not a moment, but immediately caufed his cavalry to crofs at a ford. And thus the Saxons found themfelves fhut up between the river of Parts, and the greater river of Oder, which takes its rife in Silefia, and at this place is very deep and rapid.

Though the deftruction of Schullemburg feemed to be inevitable, yet with the lofs of a few foldiers he paffed the Oder in the night. Thus he faved his army, and Charles could not help faying, "Schullemburg has conquered us to-day."

This is the fame Schullemburg, who was afterwards general of the Venetians, and to whom the republic erected a ftatue in Corfu, for having defended that bulwark of Italy againft the Turks. Such honours are conferred by republics only: kings give nothing but rewards.

But what contributed fo much to the glory of Schullemburg was of no fervice to king Auguftus, who once more abandoned Poland to his enemies; retired into Saxony, and inflantly repaired the fortifications of Dresden, being already afraid, and not without reason, for the capital of his hereditary dominions.

Charles XII. now beheld Poland reduced to fubjection. His generals, after his example, had
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beat in Courland several small bodies of the Muscovites, who ever since the battle of Narva had appeared only in small companies, and made war in those parts like the vagrant Tartars, who pillage, fly, and then re-appear in order to fly again.

Wherever the Swedes came, they thought themselves sure of victory, when they were only twenty to an hundred. At this happy conjuncture, Stanislaus prepared for his coronation. Fortune to which he owed his election at Warsaw, and his expulsion from thence, now recalled him thither, amidst the acclamations of a numerous nobility, attached to him by the fate of war. A diet was immediately convoked, where all obstacles were removed, except such as were raised by the court of Rome, which alone endeavoured to traverse the project.

It was natural for Rome to declare in favour of Augustus, who from a protestant had become a catholic, in order to mount the throne of Poland, and to oppose Stanislaus, who had been placed upon the same throne by the great enemy of the catholic religion. Clement XI. the then pope, sent briefs to all the prelates of Poland, and particularly to the cardinal-primate, threatening them with excommunication, if they presumed to assist at the consecration of Stanislaus, or attempt any thing against the rights of Augustus.

Should these briefs be delivered to the bishops, who were at Warsaw, it was believed that some of them would be weak enough to obey them; and that the majority would avail themselves of this pretext to become more troublesome in proportion as they were more necessary. Every possible precaution was therefore taken to prevent these letters

letters of the pope from being admitted into Warsaw. But a Franciscan received the briefs secretly, promising to deliver them into the bishops own hands. He presently gave one to the suffragan of Chelm. This prelate, who was strongly attached to Stanislaus, carried it to the king unopened. The king sent for the monk, and asked him how he durst undertake to deliver a writing of that nature. The Franciscan answered, that he did it by order of his general. Stanislaus desired him for the future to pay a greater regard to the orders of his king than to those of the general of the Franciscans, and forthwith banished him the city.

The same day a placart was published by the king of Sweden, forbidding, under the most severe penalties, all the ecclesiastics in Warsaw, both secular and regular, to interfere in affairs of state. And for the greater security, he caused guards to be placed at the gates of all the prelates, and forbade any stranger to enter the city. These little severities he took upon himself, in order to prevent any rupture between the clergy and Stanislaus, at his accession to the throne. He said he relaxed himself from the fatigues of war, in giving a check to the intrigues of the Romish court; and that he must fight against it with paper, whereas he was obliged to attack other sovereigns with real arms.

The cardinal-primate was solicited by Charles and Stanislaus to come and perform the ceremony of the coronation. He did not think himself obliged to leave Dantzick, and to consecrate a king who had been chosen against his will. But as it was his maxim never to do any thing without a pretext, he resolved to provide a lawful excuse for

for his refusal. He caused the pope's brief to be fixed in the night time to the gate of his own house. The magistrates of Dantzick took fire at this indignity, and caused strict search to be made for the authors, who nevertheless could not be found. The primate affected to be highly incensed, but in reality was very well pleased, as it furnished him with a reason for refusing to consecrate the new king; and thus at one and the same time he kept fair with Charles XII. Augustus, Stanislaus, and the pope. He died a few days after, leaving his country involved in confusion, and having reaped no other fruit from all his intrigues, but that of embroiling himself with the three kings, Charles, Augustus, and Stanislaus; and with the republic and the pope, who had ordered him to repair to Rome, to give an account of his conduct. But as even politicians are sometimes touched with remorse in their last moments, he wrote to king Augustus on his death-bed, and begged his pardon.

The consecration was performed with equal tranquillity and magnificence, on the fourth of October 1705, in the city of Warsaw, notwithstanding the usual custom of the Poles, of crowning their kings at Cracow. Stanislaus Leczinsky and his wife Charlotta Opalinska, were consecrated king and queen of Poland, by the hands of the archbishop of Leopold, assisted by several other prelates. Charles XII. saw the ceremony incognito, the only advantage he reaped from his conquests.

While he was thus giving a king to the conquered Poles, and Denmark durst not presume to create him any disturbances; while the king of Prussia courted his friendship, and Augustus was

retired to his hereditary dominions, the czar was every day becoming more and more formidable. Though he had given but little assistance to Augustus in Poland, he had nevertheless made powerful diversions in Ingria.

He now began to grow not only a good soldier himself, but likewise instructed his subjects in the art of war. Discipline was established among his troops. He had good engineers, and well served artillery, and several good officers; and he understood the great secret of subsisting his armies. Some of his generals had learned both how to fight, and as occasion required, to decline fighting; and he had besides formed a respectable navy, capable of making head against the Swedes in the Baltick.

Strengthened by all these advantages, which were entirely owing to his own genius, and by the absence of the king of Sweden, he took Narva by assault, on the twenty-first of August 1704, after a regular siege, during which he had prevented its receiving any succours either by sea or land. The soldiers were no sooner masters of the city than they ran to pillage, and abandoned themselves to the most enormous barbarities. The czar flew from place to place, to stop the disorder and carnage. He snatched the women from the hands of the soldiers, who, after having ravished them, were going to cut their throats. He was even obliged to kill some Muscovites who did not obey his orders. They still shew you, in the town house of Narva, the table upon which he laid his sword as he entered, and repeat the words which he spoke to the citizens, who were there assembled. "It is not with the blood of the inhabitants that this sword is stained, but with that of the
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the Muscovites, which I have shed to save your lives."

Had the czar always observed these humane maxims, he would have been the greatest man in the world. He aspired to a nobler character than that of a destroyer of towns. He was, at that time, laying the foundation of a city not far from Narva, in the middle of his new conquests. This was the city of Petersburg, which he afterwards made the place of his residence, and the center of his trade. It is situated between Finland and Ingria, in a marshy island, around which the Neva divides itself into several branches, before it falls into the gulph of Finland. With his own hands he drew the plan of the city, the fortresses, and the harbour, the keys which embellished it, and the forts which defended its entrance. This desert and uncultivated island, which during the short summer in those climates, was only a heap of mud, and in winter a frozen pool, into which there was no entry by land but through pathless forests and deep morasses, and which had hitherto been the haunt of wolves and bears, was filled in 1703, with above three hundred thousand men, whom the czar had brought thither from his other dominions. The peasants of the kingdom of Astracan, and those who inhabit the frontiers of China, were transported to Petersburg. He was obliged to clear forests, to make roads, to drain marshes, and to raise banks, before he could lay the foundation of the city. The whole was a force put upon nature. The czar was determined to people a country, which did not seem designed for the habitation of men. Neither the inundation which razed his works, nor the sterility of the soil, nor the ignorance of the workmen,

men, nor even the mortality which carried off about two hundred thousand men in the beginning of the undertaking, could divert him from his firm resolution. The town was founded amidst the obstacles which nature, the genius of the people, and an unsuccessful war, conspired to raise against it. Petersburg was become a city in 1705, and its harbour was filled with ships. The emperor, by a proper distribution of favours, drew many strangers thither, bestowing lands upon some, houses upon others, and encouraging all the artists that came to civilize this barbarous climate. Above all, he had rendered it proof against the utmost efforts of his enemies. The Swedish generals, who frequently beat his troops in every other quarter, were never able to hurt his infant colony. It enjoyed a profound tranquillity in the midst of the war, with which it was surrounded.

While the czar was thus creating, as it were, new dominions to himself, he still held out a helping hand to Augustus, who was losing his. He persuaded him, by means of general Patkul, who had lately entered into the service of Muscovy, and was then the czar's ambassador in Saxony, to come to Grodno to confer with him once more on the unhappy situation of his affairs. Thither Augustus repaired with some troops, and accompanied by general Schullemburg, who was now become famous over all the north for his passage cross the Oder, and in whom the king reposed his last hopes. The czar arrived at the same place, followed by an army of seventy thousand men. The two monarchs concerted new measures for carrying on the war. Augustus being now dethroned, was no longer afraid

of provoking the Poles, by abandoning their country to the Muscovite troops. It was resolved that the army of the czar should be divided into several bodies, to check the progress of the king of Sweden at every step. It was at this time that Augustus renewed the order of the white eagle, a weak expedient for attaching to his interest some Polish lords, who were more desirous of real advantages than of an empty honour, which becomes ridiculous when it is held of a prince possessed of nothing but the name of king. The conference of the two kings ended in a very extraordinary manner. The czar departed suddenly, left his troops to his ally, and went to extinguish a rebellion with which he was threatened in Astracan. Immediately after his departure, Augustus ordered Patkul to be arrested at Dresden. All Europe was surprised at his conduct, in presuming, contrary to the law of nations, and even in appearance to his own interest, to imprison the ambassador of the only prince from whom he could expect any assistance.

The secret spring of this transaction, as I had the honour to be informed from marshal Saxe, son to king Augustus, was as follows: Patkul, proscribed in Sweden for having defended the privileges of Livonia, his native country, had been general to Augustus; but his high and lofty spirit being unable to brook the haughty behaviour of general Fleming, the king's favourite, more imperious and lofty than himself, he had passed into the service of the czar, whose general he then was, and his ambassador at the court of Augustus. Endowed, as he was, with a penetrating genius, he had observed that Fleming and the chancellor of Saxony intended to purchase a
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peace from the king of Sweden at any price. He forthwith formed a design to prevent them, and to effect an accommodation between the czar and Sweden. The chancellor discovered his project, and obtained leave to seize him. Augustus told the czar that Patkul was a perfidious wretch, and would betray them both. And yet he was no further culpable than in having served his new master too well; but an ill-timed piece of service frequently meets with the punishment due to treason.

Mean while, the sixty thousand Russians, divided into several small bodies, were burning and ravaging the lands of Stanislaus' adherents, on one side; and on the other, Schullemburg was advancing with fresh troops. The fortune of the Swedes dispersed these two armies in less than two months. Charles XII. and Stanislaus attacked the separate bodies of the Muscovites, one after another, and with so much vigour and dispatch, that one Muscovite general was beat before he heard of the defeat of his companion.

Nothing could stop the progress of the conqueror. If a river intervened between him and the enemy, Charles XII. and his Swedes swam across it. A party of Swedes took the baggage of Augustus, in which were found two hundred thousand crowns of silver. Stanislaus seized eight hundred thousand ducats belonging to prince Menzikoff, the Russian general. Charles, at the head of his cavalry, marched thirty leagues in four and twenty hours; every soldier leading a horse in his hand to mount when his own was weary. The Muscovites, struck with terror, and reduced to a small number, fled in disorder beyond the Boristhenes.

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While Charles was driving the Muscovites before him into the heart of Lithuania, Schullemburg at last repassed the Oder, and came at the head of twenty thousand men to give battle to the grand marshal, Renschild, who was reckoned the best general that Charles had, and was called the Parmenio of this Alexander of the North. These two illustrious generals, who seemed to share the fate of their masters, met near Punitz, in a place called Travenstad, a spot already fatal to the troops of Augustus. Renschild had only thirteen battalions, and two and twenty squadrons, amounting in all to about ten thousand men. Schullemburg had double that number. It is worthy of remark, that there was in his army a body of six or seven thousand Muscovites, who had been long disciplined, and were esteemed good soldiers. The battle of Travenstad was fought on the twelfth of February 1706. But this very general Schullemburg, who, with four and twenty thousand men, had, in some measure, baffled the good fortune of the king of Sweden, sunk under that of general Renschild. The combat did not last a quarter of an hour; the Saxons made no resistance; the Muscovites threw down their arms the moment they saw the Swedes. The panic was so sudden, and the confusion so great, that the conquerors found on the field of battle seven thousand loaded fuses, which the enemy had thrown away without firing. No defeat was ever more sudden, more complete, or more disgraceful; and yet no general ever made a finer disposition of his troops than Schullemburg, even by the confession of the Saxon and Swedish generals themselves, who this day saw how little human prudence is able to command events.

Among the prisoners there was an entire regiment of Frenchmen. These unhappy men had been taken by the Saxons in 1704, at the famous battle of Hochstet, so fatal to the grandeur of Lewis XIV. They had afterwards passed into the service of Augustus, who had formed them into a regiment of dragoons, the command of which he had given to a Frenchman of the family of Joyeuse. The colonel was killed at the first, or rather the only charge of the Swedes; and the whole regiment were made prisoners of war. That very day the French begged to be admitted into the service of Charles XII. into which they were accordingly received by a strange caprice of fortune, which reserved them once more to change their master and their conqueror.

With regard to the Muscovites, they begged their lives on their knees; but the Swedes cruelly put them to death above six hours after the battle, in order to revenge on them the outrages which their countrymen had committed, and to rid their hands of those prisoners whom they did not know how to dispose of.

Augustus now saw himself deprived of all resources. He had nothing left but Cracow, where he was shut up with two regiments of Muscovites, two of Saxons, and some troops of the army of the crown, by whom he was even afraid of being delivered up to the conqueror: but his misfortunes were completed when he heard that Charles XII. had at last entered Saxony, on the first of September 1706.

He had marched through Silesia, without so much as deigning to apprise the court of Vienna of his motions. Germany was struck with consternation. The diet of Ratisbon, which represents the

the empire, and whose resolutions are frequently as ineffectual as they are solemn, declared the king of Sweden an enemy of the empire, if he should pass the Oder with his army : a step which only determined him to march the sooner into Germany.

At his approach the villages were deserted, and the inhabitants fled on all sides. Charles behaved in the same manner as he had done at Copenhagen : he caused a declaration to be fixed up in all public places, importing, That his only intention in coming was to procure peace; that all those who should return home and pay the contributions he demanded, should be treated as his own subjects, and the rest punished without mercy. This declaration from a prince who was never known to break his word, made all those who had fled for fear, to return home. He pitched his camp at Altranstad, near the plain of Lutzen, a field famous for the victory and death of Gustavus Adolphus. He went to see the place where that great man fell. When he reached the spot, " I have endeavoured (said he) to live like him ; God, perhaps, will one day grant me as glorious a death."

From this camp, he sent orders to the states of Saxony to assemble, and to transmit to him, without delay, the registers of the electoral finances. As soon as he had got them in his power, and was exactly informed how much Saxony could supply, he taxed it at six hundred twenty five thousand rix-dollars a-month. Over and above this contribution, the Saxons were obliged to furnish every Swedish soldier with two pounds of flesh, two pounds of bread, two pots of beer, and four pence a-day, with forage for the horse. The con-

tributions being thus regulated, the king established a new police, to protect the Saxons from the insults of his soldiers. In all the towns where he placed garrisons, he ordered the inn-keepers, in whose houses the soldiers were quartered, to deliver every month certificates of their behaviour, without which the soldiers were to have no pay. Besides, inspectors were appointed, who, once in every fifteen days, went from house to house to make inquiry whether the Swedes had committed any outrage; in which case, care was taken to indemnify the inn-keepers, and to punish the delinquents.

It is well known under what severe discipline the troops of Charles XII. were kept; that they never plundered the towns which they took by assault till they had received permission; and that they even plundered in a regular manner, and left off at the first signal. The Swedes pique themselves to this day on the strict discipline which they observed in Saxony; and yet the Saxons complain of the terrible ravages they committed; contradictions which it would be impossible to reconcile, did not we know in what very different lights the same objects appear to different men. It could hardly happen but that the conquerors must have sometimes abused their rights; and the conquered have taken the slightest injuries for the most enormous outrages. One day, as the king was taking the air on horseback, in the neighbourhood of Leipzick, a Saxon peasant threw himself at his feet, begging he would do him justice on a grenadier, who had just taken from him what was designed for his family's dinner. The king ordered the soldier to be brought before him; "And is it true, (says he with a stern countenance)

nance) that you have robbed this man?" "Sir, (says the soldier) I have not done him so much harm as you have done to his master: you have taken a kingdom from him, and I have only taken a turkey from this fellow." The king gave the peasant ten ducats with his own hand, and pardoned the soldier for the wit and boldness of the reply; adding, "Remember, friend, that, if I have taken a kingdom from Augustus, I have kept nothing to myself."

The great fair of Leipfick was held as usual. The merchants came thither in perfect security. Not one Swedish soldier was to be seen in the fair. One would have said that the army of the king of Sweden was in Saxony for no other reason than to watch over the safety of the country. He commanded throughout all the electorate with a power as absolute, and a tranquillity as profound, as if he had been in Stockholm.

Augustus wandering up and down Poland, and deprived at once of his kingdom and electorate, at last wrote a letter with his own hand to Charles XII. in which he humbly sued for peace. This letter he sent secretly by baron d'Imhoff and Mr. Fingsten refendary of the privy council, to which two gentlemen he gave full power, and a blank signed: "Go, (says he to them) endeavour to procure me reasonable and christian conditions." He was obliged, however, to conceal these overtures, and to decline the mediation of any prince; for, being then in Poland, at the mercy of the Muscovites, he had reason to fear that that dangerous ally, whom he was now going to abandon, would punish him for his submission to the conqueror. His two plenipotentiaries came to Charles's camp in the night-time, and had a private audience.

dience. The king having read the letter, told them they should have his answer in a moment; and accordingly retiring to his closet, he wrote as follows:

“ I consent to give peace on the following conditions, in which it must not be expected that ever I will make the least alteration.

I. That Augustus renounce the crown of Poland for ever; that he acknowledge Stanislaus as lawful king; and that he promise never to remount the throne, not even after the death of Stanislaus.

II. That he renounce all other treaties, and particularly those he hath made with Muscovy.

III. That he send back to my camp, in an honourable manner, the princes Sobieski, and all the prisoners he hath taken.

IV. That he deliver into my hands all the deserters that have entered into his service, and particularly John Patkul; and that he stop all proceedings against such as have passed from his service into mine.”

This paper he gave to count Piper, with orders to transact the rest with the plenipotentiaries of Augustus. These gentlemen were shocked at the cruelty of the proposals; and used all the little arts that men without power can employ, to soften, if possible, the rigour of the king of Sweden. They had several conferences with count Piper; but that minister answered all their arguments with this short reply; “ Such is the will of the king my master, and he never alters his resolution.”

While these negotiations were carrying on in Saxony, fortune seemed to put Augustus in a condition to obtain more honourable terms, and of treating

treating with his conqueror on a more equal footing.

Prince Menzikoff, generalissimo of the Muscovite army, brought into Poland a body of thirty thousand men, at a time when Augustus not only did not desire their assistance, but even feared it. He had with him some Polish and Saxon troops, making in all about six thousand men. Surrounded with this small body by the army of prince Menzikoff, he had every thing to fear, in case the negociation should be discovered. He saw himself at once dethroned by his enemy, and in danger of being arrested by his ally. In this delicate conjuncture, one of the Swedish generals, named Meyerfeld, at the head of ten thousand men, appeared at Calish, near the palatinate of Posnania. Prince Menzikoff pressed Augustus to give them battle. The king, who was greatly embarrassed, delayed the engagement under various pretexts; for though the enemy had but one third of his number, there were four thousand Swedes in Meyerfeld's army, and that alone was sufficient to render the event doubtful. To give battle to the Swedes during the negociation, and to lose it, was, in effect, to deepen the abyss in which he was already plunged. He therefore resolved to send a trusty servant to the general of the enemy, to give him some distant hints with regard to the peace, and advise him to retreat. But this advice produced an effect quite contrary to what he expected. General Meyerfeld thought they were laying a snare to intimidate him; and for that reason resolved to hazard a battle.

The Russians, now for the first time, conquered the Swedes in a pitched battle. This victory, which Augustus gained almost against his will,

was entire and complete. In the midst of his bad fortune, he entered triumphant into Warsaw, formerly his flourishing capital, but then a dismantled and ruined town, ready to receive any conqueror, and to acknowledge the strongest for king. He was tempted to seize upon this moment of prosperity, to go and attack the king of Sweden in Saxony with the Muscovite army. But when he reflected that Charles XII. was at the head of a Swedish army, hitherto invincible; that the Russians would abandon him on the first intelligence of the treaty he had begun; that his Saxon dominions, already drained of men and money, would be equally ravaged by the Swedes and Muscovites; that the empire, engaged in a war with France, could afford him no assistance; and that, in the end, he should be left without dominions, money, or friends; he thought it most adviseable to comply with the terms which the king of Sweden should impose. These terms became still more hard when Charles heard that Augustus had attacked his troops during the negotiation. His resentment, and the pleasure of further humbling an enemy who had just vanquished his forces, made him inflexible upon all the articles of the treaty. Thus the victory of Augustus served only to render his situation the more miserable; a thing which perhaps never happened to any but himself.

He had just caused *Te Deum* to be sung at Warsaw, when Fingsten, one of his plenipotentiaries, arrived from Saxony with the treaty of peace which deprived him of his crown. Augustus hesitated for a little, but at last signed it; and then set out for Saxony, vainly hoping that his presence would soften the king of Sweden, and that
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his enemy would perhaps remember the ancient alliances of their families, and the common blood that ran in both their veins.

These two princes met for the first time in count Piper's tent, at a place called Gutersdorff, without any ceremony. Charles XII. was in jack-boots, with a piece of black taffety tied round his neck instead of a cravat: his cloaths, as usual, were of coarse blue cloath, with gilt brass buttons. He had a long sword by his side, which had served him in the battle of Narva, and upon the pummel of which he frequently leaned. The conversation turned wholly upon these jack-boots; Charles XII. told Augustus that he had not laid them aside for these six years past, except when he went to bed. These trifles were the only subject of discourse between two kings, one of whom had deprived the other of a crown. Augustus, especially, spoke with an air of complaisance and satisfaction, which princes, and men accustomed to the management of great affairs, know how to assume amidst the most cruel mortifications. The two kings dined together two several times. Charles XII. always affected to give Augustus the right hand; but, far from mitigating the rigour of his demands, he rendered them still more severe. It was certainly a very mortifying thing, for a sovereign to be forced to deliver up a general officer and a public minister. It was still a greater debasement to be obliged to send the jewels and archives of the crown to his successor Stanislaus. But what completed his degradation was his being at last compelled to congratulate, on his accession to the throne, the man who was going to usurp his place. Charles required Augustus to write a letter to Stanislaus. The dethroned king endeavoured to evade

the demand ; but Charles insisted upon his writing the letter, and he was at last obliged to comply. Here follows an exact copy of it, which I have seen. It is transcribed from the original, which is still in the possession of king Stanislaus.

“ SIR and BROTHER,

“ We little imagined it would have been necessary to enter into a literary correspondence with your majesty ; nevertheless, in order to please his Swedish majesty, and to avoid the suspicion of our being unwilling to gratify his desire, we hereby congratulate you on your accession to the throne ; and wish you may find in your native country more faithful subjects than we have left there. All the world will do us the justice to believe, that we have received nothing but the most ungrateful returns for our good offices, and that the greater part of our subjects seemed to have no other aim than to hasten our ruin. Wishing that you may never be exposed to the like misfortunes, we commit you to the protection of God.

Dresden, April

8, 1707.

Your brother and neighbour,

AUGUSTUS, King.

Augustus was obliged to give orders to all his magistrates no longer to stile him king of Poland, and to erase this title, which he now renounced, out of the public prayers. He was less averse to the releasing of the Sobieskies ; but the sacrifice of Patkul was the severest of all. The czar, on the one hand, loudly demanded him back as his ambassador ; and on the other, the king of Sweden, with the most terrible menaces in case of a refusal, insisted that he should be delivered

livered up to him. Patkul was then confined in the castle of Konigstein, in Saxony. Augustus thought he might easily gratify Charles XII. and save his own honour. He sent his guards to deliver this unhappy man to the Swedish troops; but he previously dispatched a secret order to the governor of Konigstein, to let his prisoner escape. The bad fortune of Patkul defeated the pains that were taken to save him. The governor, knowing that Patkul was very rich, had a mind to make him purchase his liberty. The prisoner still relying on the law of nations, and informed of the intentions of Augustus, refused to pay for that which he thought he had a title to obtain for nothing. During this interval, the guards who were commissioned to seize the prisoner arrived, and immediately delivered him to four Swedish captains, who carried him forthwith to the general quarters at Altranstad, where he remained for three months tied to a stake, with a heavy iron chain; and from thence was conducted to Casimir.

Charles XII. forgetting that Patkul was the czar's ambassador, and considering him only as his own subject, ordered a council of war to try him with the utmost rigour. He was condemned to be broke alive, and quartered. A chaplain having come to inform him of the fatal sentence, without acquainting him with the manner in which it was to be executed, Patkul, who had braved death in so many battles, finding himself shut up with a priest, and his courage being no longer supported by glory or passion, the only sources of human intrepidity, poured out a flood of tears into the chaplain's bosom. He was affianced to a Saxon lady, called Madam d'Einsiedel, a woman

man of birth, of merit, and of beauty, and whom he intended to have married much about the time that he was now condemned to die. He intreated the chaplain to wait upon her, to give her all the consolation he could, and to assure her that he died full of the most tender affection for his incomparable mistress. When he was brought to the place of punishment, and beheld the wheels and stakes prepared for his execution, he fell into convulsions, and threw himself into the arms of the minister, who embraced him, covered him with his cloak, and wept over him. Then a Swedish officer read aloud a paper to the following effect :

“ This is to declare, that it is the express order of his majesty, our most merciful lord, that this man, who is a traitor to his country, be broke upon the wheel, and quartered, in order to atone for his crimes, and to be an example to others ; that every one may beware of treason, and faithfully serve his king.” At the words “ most merciful prince,” Patkul cried out, “ What mercy ?” and at those of “ traitor to his country,” “ Alas ! (said he) I have served it but too well.” He received sixteen blows, and suffered the longest and most excruciating tortures that can be imagined. Thus died the unfortunate John Reinold Patkul, ambassador and general of the emperor of Russia.

Those that looked upon him only as a rebel, said that he deserved death ; but those who considered him as a Livonian, born in a province that had privileges to defend, and remembered that he had been banished from Livonia for no other reason than his having defended those privileges, called him a martyr to the liberty of his country.

But all agreed that the title of ambassador to the czar ought to have rendered his person sacred. The king of Sweden alone, brought up in the principles of arbitrary power, thought that he had only performed an act of justice, whilst all Europe condemned his cruelty.

His mangled limbs remained exposed upon gibbets till 1713, when Augustus having regained his throne, caused these testimonies of the necessity to which he was reduced at Altranstad to be gathered together. They were brought to Warsaw in a box, and delivered to him in presence of the French envoy. The king of Poland shewing the box to this minister, only said, "These are the limbs of Patkul;" without adding any thing, either to blame his conduct or to bewail his memory, and without any one daring to speak on so delicate and mournful a subject.

About this time, a Livonian called Paikel, an officer in the Saxon troops, who had been taken prisoner in the field, was condemned at Stockholm by a decree of the senate; but his sentence was only to lose his head. This difference of punishments in the same case, made it but too plain, that Charles, in putting Patkul to such a cruel death, was more anxious to avenge himself than to punish the criminal. Be that as it will, Paikel, after his condemnation, proposed to the senate to impart to the king the secret of making gold, on condition that he should obtain his pardon. He made the experiment in prison, in presence of colonel Hamilton and the magistrates of the town; and whether he had actually discovered some useful secret, or, which is more probable, had only acquired the art of deceiving with a plausible air, they carried the gold which was found
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in the crucible to the mint at Stockholm, and gave the senate such a full, and seemingly such an important account of the matter, that the queen-dowager, Charles's grandmother, ordered the execution to be suspended till the king should be informed of this uncommon affair, and should send his orders accordingly.

The king made answer, "That he had refused the pardon of the criminal to the entreaties of his friends, and that he would never grant to interest what he had denied to friendship." This inflexibility had something in it very heroical in a prince, especially as he thought the secret practicable. Augustus, upon hearing this story, said, "I am not surprised at the king of Sweden's indifference about the philosopher's stone: he has found it in Saxony."

When the czar was informed of the strange peace which Augustus had, notwithstanding their former treaties, concluded at Altranstad; and that Patkul, his ambassador-plenipotentiary, was delivered up to the king of Sweden, in contempt of the law of nations, he loudly complained of these indignities to the courts of Europe. He wrote to the emperor of Germany, to the queen of England, and to the states-general of the United Provinces. He gave the terms of cowardice and treachery to the sad necessity to which Augustus had been obliged to submit. He conjured all these powers to interpose their mediation to procure the restoration of his ambassador, and to prevent the affront, which, in his person, was going to be offered to all crowned heads. He pressed them, by the motive of honour, not to demean themselves so far as to become guarantees of the treaty of Altranstad; a concession which Charles XII. meant

to extort from them by his threatening and imperious behaviour. These letters had no other effect than to set the power of the king of Sweden in a stronger light. The emperor, England, and Holland, were then engaged in a destructive war against France, and thought it a very unseasonable juncture to exasperate Charles XII. by refusing the vain ceremony of being guarantees to a treaty. With regard to the unhappy Patkul, there was not a single power that interposed its good offices in his behalf; from whence it appears what little confidence a subject ought to put in princes, and how much all the European powers at that time stood in awe of the king of Sweden.

It was proposed in the czar's council to retaliate on the Swedish officers who were prisoners at Moscow; but the czar would not consent to a barbarity which would have been attended with fatal consequences, as there were more Muscovites prisoners in Sweden, than Swedes in Muscovy.

He resolved to take a more advantageous revenge. The main body of his enemy's army lay idle in Saxony. Levenhaupt, the king of Sweden's general, who was left in Poland with about twenty thousand men, was not able to guard the passes into a country without forts, and full of factions. Stanislaus was in the camp of Charles XII. The emperor of Muscovy seizes this opportunity, and re-enters Poland with above 60,000 men. These he divides into several bodies, and marches with a flying camp to Leopold, where there was no Swedish garrison. All the towns of Poland yield to any one who appears before their gates at the head of an army. He caused an assembly to be convoked at Leopold, of much the
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same nature with that which had dethroned Augustus at Warsaw.

At that time Poland had two primates, as well as two kings, the one nominated by Augustus, the other by Stanislaus. The primate nominated by Augustus summoned the assembly of Leopold, to which resorted all those whom that prince had abandoned by the peace of Altranstad, and such as were gained by the czar's money. Here it was proposed to elect a new sovereign; so that Poland was almost upon the point of having three kings at once, without being able to say which was the real one.

During the conferences at Leopold, the czar, whose interest was closely connected with that of the emperor of Germany, on account of the common dread which they both entertained of the power of the king of Sweden, secretly obtained from him a number of German officers; who daily arriving, encreased his strength in a considerable degree, by bringing along with them discipline and experience. These he engaged in his service by several instances of liberality; and the more to encourage his own troops, he gave his picture set round with diamonds to all the general officers and colonels who had fought at the battle of Calish: the subaltern officers had medals of gold, and every private soldier a medal of silver. These monuments of the victory at Calish were all struck in the new city of Petersburg; where the improvement of the arts kept pace with the desire of glory and spirit of emulation which the czar had infused into his troops.

The confusion, the multiplicity of factions, and the continual ravages prevailing in Poland, hindered the diet of Leopold from coming to any resolution.

solution. The czar transferred it to Lublin; but the change of place did not lessen the disorder and perplexity in which the whole nation was involved. The assembly contented themselves with declaring that they neither acknowledged Augustus who had abdicated the throne, nor Stanislaus who had been elected against their will; but they were neither sufficiently united, nor had resolution enough to nominate another king. During these fruitless deliberations, the party of the princes Sapieha, that of Oginsky, those who secretly adhered to Augustus, and the new subjects of Stanislaus, all made war upon one another, and by pillaging each other's estates, completed the ruin of their country. The Swedish troops, commanded by Levenhaupt, one part of which lay in Livonia, another in Lithuania, and a third in Poland, were daily in pursuit of the Russians, and set fire to every thing that opposed Stanislaus. The Russians ruined their friends and foes without distinction; and nothing was to be seen but towns reduced to ashes, and wandering troops of Poles, deprived of all their substance, and detesting alike their two kings, the czar, and Charles XII.

To quell these commotions, and to secure the possession of the throne, Stanislaus set out from Altranstad on the fifteenth of July, 1707, accompanied by general Renschild, and sixteen Swedish regiments, and furnished with a large sum of money. He was acknowledged wherever he came. The strict discipline of his troops, which made the barbarity of the Muscovites to be more sensibly felt, conciliated the affections of the people. His extreme affability, in proportion as it was better known, reconciled to him almost all the different factions; and his money procured him
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the greatest part of the army of the crown. The czar, apprehensive of wanting provisions, in a country which his troops had laid waste, retired into Lithuania, where he had fixed the general rendezvous of his army, and where he resolved to establish magazines. This retreat left Stanislaus the undisturbed sovereign of the greatest part of Poland.

The only person that gave him any uneasiness, was count Sincausky, grand general of the crown, by the nomination of Augustus. This man, who was possessed of no contemptible talents, and entertained the most ambitious views, was at the head of a third party. He neither acknowledged Augustus nor Stanislaus; and after having used his utmost efforts in order to procure his own election, he contented himself with being the head of a party, since he could not be king. The troops of the crown, which continued under his command, had no other pay but the liberty of pillaging their fellow subjects with impunity. And all those who had either suffered, or were apprehensive of suffering, from the rapacity of these free booters, soon submitted to Stanislaus, whose power was gathering strength every day.

The king of Sweden was then receiving, in his camp at Altranstad, ambassadors from almost all the princes in Christendom. Some entreated him to quit the empire, others desired him to turn his arms against the emperor; and it was then the general report, that he intended to join with France, in humbling the house of Austria. Among these ambassadors was the famous John duke of Marlborough, sent by Anne, queen of Great Britain. This man, who never besieged a town which he did not take, nor fought a battle which he

he did not gain, was at St. James's a perfect courtier, in parliament the head of a party, and in foreign countries the most able negociator of his time. He did France as much mischief by his politics as by his arms. Mr. Fagel, secretary of the states general, and a man of great merit, has been heard to say, that when the states general had more than once resolved to oppose the schemes which the duke was about to lay before them, the duke came, spoke to them in French, a language in which he expressed himself but very indifferently, and brought them all over to his opinion. This account I had from lord Bolingbroke.

In conjunction with prince Eugene, the companion of his victories, and Heinsius, the grand pensionary of Holland, he supported the whole weight of the war which the allies waged against France. He knew that Charles was incensed against the empire and the emperor; that he was secretly solicited by the French; and that if this conqueror should espouse the cause of Lewis XIV. the allies must be entirely ruined,

True it is, Charles had given his word in 1700, that he would not intermeddle in the quarrel between Lewis XIV. and the allies; but the duke of Marlborough could not believe that any prince would be so great a slave to his word as not to sacrifice it to his grandeur and interest. He therefore set out from the Hague with a resolution to sound the intentions of the king of Sweden. Mr. Fabricius, who then attended upon Charles XII. assured me, that the duke of Marlborough, on his arrival, applied secretly, not to count Piper, the prime minister, but to baron de Gortz, who now began to share with Piper the confidence of the king. He even went to the quarters of
Charles

Charles XII. in the coach of this gentleman *, between whom and the chancellor Piper, together with Robinson, the English minister, he spoke to the king in French. He told him that he should esteem it a singular happiness, could he have an opportunity of learning under his command such parts of the art of war as he did not yet understand. To this polite compliment the king made no return, and seemed to forget that it was Marlborough who was speaking to him. He even thought, as I have been credibly informed, that the dress of this great man was too fine and costly; and that his air had in it too little of a soldier. The conversation was tedious and general. Charles XII. speaking in the Swedish tongue, and Robinson serving as an interpreter. Marlborough, who was never in a haste to make proposals; and who, by a long course of experience, had learned the art of diving into the real characters of men, and discovering the connection between their most secret thoughts and their actions, gestures, and discourse, regarded the king with the utmost attention. When he spoke to him of war in general, he thought he perceived in his majesty a natural aversion to France; and remarked that he talked with pleasure of the conquests of the allies. He mentioned the czar to him, and observed that his eyes always kindled at

* When the duke arrived at the quarters of count Piper, of whom he had demanded an audience, he was told the count was busy, and obliged to wait half an hour before the Swedish minister came down to receive him. Then the duke alighted from his coach, put on his hat, passed the count without saluting him, went aside to the wall, where having staid a few minutes, he returned and accosted Piper with the most polite address.

the name, notwithstanding the calmness of the conversation. Besides, he saw a map of Muscovy lying before him upon the table. He wanted no more to convince him, that the real design and the sole ambition of the king of Sweden was to dethrone the czar, as he had already done the king of Poland. He was sensible that, if Charles remained in Saxony, it was only to impose some hard conditions on the emperor of Germany. He knew the emperor would make no resistance, and that thus all disputes would be easily accommodated. He left Charles XII. to follow the bent of his own mind; and satisfied with having discovered his intentions, he made him no proposals. These particulars I had from the dutchess of Marlborough, his widow, who is still alive*.

As few negotiations are finished without money, and as ministers are sometimes seen to sell the hatred or favour of their masters, it was the general opinion throughout all Europe, that the duke of Marlborough would not have succeeded so well with the king of Sweden, had he not made a handsome present to count Piper, whose memory still labours under the imputation. For my own part, after having traced this report to its source, with all the care and accuracy of which I am master, I have found that Piper received a small present from the emperor, by the hands of the count de Wratislau, with the consent of his master, and not a farthing from the duke of Marlborough. Certain it is, Charles was so firmly resolved to dethrone the emperor of Russia, that

* The author wrote in 1727, since which time, as appears from other dates, the work hath undergone several corrections,

he asked no body's advice on that subject, nor needed the instigation of count Piper to prompt him to wreak his long meditated vengeance on the head of Peter Alexiowitz.

But what vindicates the character of that minister beyond all probability and cavil was the honour which, long after this period, was paid to his memory by Charles XII. who having heard that Piper was dead in Russia, caused his corps to be transported to Stockholm, and gave him a magnificent funeral at his own expence.

The king, who had not as yet experienced any reverse of fortune, nor even met with any interruption in his victories, thought one year would be sufficient for dethroning the czar; after which, he imagined he might return in peace and erect himself into the arbiter of Europe. But, first of all, he resolved to humble the emperor of Germany.

The baron de Stralheim, the Swedish envoy at Vienna, had had a quarrel at a public entertainment, with the count de Zobor, chamberlain of the emperor. The latter having refused to drink the health of Charles XII. and having bluntly declared that that prince had used his master ill, Stralheim gave him at once the lie and a box on the ear, and besides this insult, boldly demanded a reparation from the imperial court. The emperor, afraid of displeasing the king of Sweden, was obliged to banish his subject, whom he ought rather to have avenged. Charles, not satisfied even with this condescension, insisted that count Zobor should be delivered up to him. The pride of the court of Vienna was forced to stoop. The count was put into the hands of the king, who
sent

sent him back, after having kept him for some time as a prisoner at Stettin.

He further demanded, contrary to all the laws of nations, that they should deliver up to him fifteen hundred unhappy Muscovites, who having escaped the fury of his arms, had fled for refuge into the empire. The emperor was obliged to yield even to this unreasonable demand; and had not the Russian envoy at Vienna given these unhappy wretches an opportunity of escaping by different roads, they must have been delivered into the hands of their enemies.

The third and last of his demands was the most daring. He declared himself the protector of the emperor's protestant subjects in Silesia, a province belonging to the house of Austria, and not to the empire. He insisted that the emperor should grant them the liberties and privileges which had been established by the treaties of Westphalia, but which were extinguished, or at least eluded by those of Ryswick. The emperor, who wanted only to get rid of such a dangerous neighbour, yielded once more, and granted all that he desired. The Lutherans of Silesia had above an hundred churches, which the Catholicks were obliged to cede to them by this treaty: but of these advantages, which were now procured them by the king of Sweden's good fortune, they were afterwards deprived, when that prince was no longer in a condition to impose laws.

The emperor who made these forced concessions, and complied in every thing with the will of Charles XII. was called Joseph; and was the eldest son of Leopold, and brother of Charles VI. who succeeded him. The pope's inter-nuncio,
K
who

who then resided at the court of Joseph, reproached him in very severe terms, alledging that it was a most shameful condescension for a Catholic emperor, like him, to sacrifice the interest of his own religion to that of hereticks. "You may think yourself very happy, replied the emperor, with a smile, that the king of Sweden did not propose to make me a Lutheran; for if he had, I do not know what I might have done."

The count de Wratislau, his ambassador with Charles XII. brought to Leipzig the treaty in favour of the Silesians, signed with his master's hand; upon which Charles said, he was the emperor's very good friend. He was far from being pleased, however, with the court of Rome, which had employed all its arts and intrigues, in order to traverse his scheme. He looked with the utmost contempt upon the weakness of that court, which, having one half of Europe for its irreconcilable enemy, and placing no confidence in the other, can only support its credit by the dexterity of its negotiations; and he therefore resolved to be revenged on his holiness. He told the count de Wratislau, that the Swedes had formerly subdued Rome, and had not degenerated like her. He sent the pope word, that he would one day redemand the effects which queen Christina had left at Rome. It is hard to say how far this young conqueror might have carried his resentment and his arms, had fortune favoured his designs. At that time nothing appeared impossible to him. He had even sent several officers privately into Asia and Egypt, to take plans of the towns, and to examine into the strength of those countries. Certain it is, that if ever prince was able to overturn

turn the empire of the Turks and Persians, and from thence pass into Italy, it was Charles XII. He was as young as Alexander, as brave, as enterprizing, more indefatigable, more robust, and more temperate; and the Swedes perhaps were better soldiers than the Macedonians. But such projects, which are called divine when they succeed, are regarded only as chimeras when they prove abortive.

At last, having removed every difficulty, and accomplished all his designs; having humbled the emperor, given laws in the empire, protected the Lutheran religion in the midst of the Catholics, dethroned one king, crowned another, and rendered himself the terror of all the princes around him, he began to prepare for his departure. The pleasures of Saxony, where he had remained inactive for a whole year, had not made the least alteration in his manner of living. He mounted his horse thrice a-day, rose at four in the morning, dressed himself with his own hands, drank no wine, sat at table only a quarter of an hour, exercised his troops every day, and knew no other pleasure but that of making Europe tremble.

The Swedes were still uncertain whither their king intended to lead them. They had only some slight suspicion that he meant to go to Moscow. A few days before his departure, he ordered the grand marshal of his household, to give him in writing the route from Leipfick—at that word he paused a moment; and, lest the marshal should discover his project, he added, with a smile—to all the capital cities of Europe. The mareschal brought him a list of all these

routes, at the head of which he placed, in great letters, "The route from Leipfick to Stockholm." The generality of Swedes were extremely desirous of returning home; but the king was far from the thoughts of carrying them back to their native country. "Mr. Marefchal, fays he, I plainly fee whither you would lead me; but we fhall not return to Stockholm fo foon."

The army was already on its march, and was paffing by Drefden. Charles was at the head of his men, always riding, as ufual, two or three hundred paces before his guards. All of a fudden he vanifhed from their fight. Some officers advanced at full gallop to fee where he was. They ran to all parts, but could not find him. In a moment the alarm was fpread over the whole army. The troops were ordered to halt: the generals afsembled together, and were already in the utmoft confternation. At laft they learned from a Saxon, who was paffing by, what was become of the king.

As he was paffing fo near Drefden, he took it into his head to pay a vifit to Auguftus. He entered the town on horfeback, followed by three or four general officers. The fentries of the gates afked them their names? Charles faid his name was Carl, and that he was a Draban; and all the reft took fictitious names. Count Fleming, feeing them pafs through the town, had only time to run and inform his mafter. All that could poffibly be done on fuch an occafion immediately prefented itfelf to the mind of that minifter, who laid it before Auguftus. But Charles entered the chamber in his boots, before Auguftus had time to recover from his fur-

surprize. Augustus was then sick, and in his night-gown ; but dressed himself in a hurry. Charles breakfasted with him, as a traveller who comes to take leave of his friend ; and then expressed his desire of viewing the fortifications. During the short time he employed in walking round them, a Livonian who had been condemned in Sweden, and now served in the Saxon army, imagining that he could never find a more favourable opportunity of obtaining his pardon, entreated Augustus to ask it of Charles, being fully convinced that his majesty would not refuse so small a favour to a prince from whom he had taken a crown, and in whose power he now was. Augustus readily undertook the charge. He was then at some distance from the king, and was conversing with Hord, a Swedish general. " I believe, said he smiling, your master will not refuse me." " You do not know him, replied general Hord, he will rather refuse you here than any where else." Augustus however did not fail to prefer the petition in very pressing terms ; and Charles refused it in such a manner as to prevent a repetition of the request. After having passed some hours in this strange visit, he embraced Augustus, and departed. Upon rejoining his army, he found all his generals still in consternation. They told him they had determined to besiege Dresden, in case his majesty had been detained a prisoner. " Right, said the king, they durst not." Next day, upon hearing the news that Augustus held an extraordinary council at Dresden : " You see, said baron Stralheim, they are deliberating upon what they should have done yesterday."

A few days after Renschild, coming to wait upon the king, expressed his surprize at this unaccountable visit to Augustus. "I confided, said Charles, in my good fortune; but I have seen the moment that might have proved prejudicial to me. Fleming had no mind that I should leave Dresden so soon."

T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F
C H A R L E S X I I .
K I N G of S W E D E N .

B O O K I V .

T H E C O N T E N T S .

CHARLES quits SAXONY in a victorious Manner :
Pursues the Czar : Shuts himself up in the
UKRAINE : His Losses : His Wound : The
Battle of PULTOWA : Consequences of that
Battle : Charles obliged to fly into TURKY :
His reception in Bessarabia.

CHARLES at last took leave of Saxony, in
September 1707, followed by an army of
forty-three thousand men, formerly covered with
steel, but now shining with gold and silver, and
enriched with the spoils of Poland and Saxony.
Every soldier carried with him fifty crowns in re-
ady money. Not only were all the regiments
complete, but in every company there were several
supernumeraries. Besides this army, Count Leven-
haupt, one of his best generals, waited for him
in Poland with twenty thousand men. He had
another army of fifteen thousand in Finland; and

fresh recruits were coming to him from Sweden. With all these forces it was not doubted but that he would easily dethrone the czar.

That emperor was then in Lithuania, endeavouring to reanimate a party which Augustus seemed to have abandoned. His troops, divided into several bodies, fled on all sides at the first report of the king of Sweden's approach. He himself had enjoined his generals never to wait for the conqueror with unequal forces; and he was punctually obeyed.

The king of Sweden, in the midst of his victorious march, received an ambassador from the Turks. The ambassador had his audience in count Piper's quarters; for it was always in that minister's tent that ceremonies of pomp were performed. On these occasions he supported the dignity of his master, by an appearance which had in it something magnificent; and the king, who was always worse lodged, worse served, and more plainly dressed than the meanest officer in his army, was wont to say, that his palace was Piper's quarters. The Turkish ambassador presented Charles with an hundred Swedish soldiers, who having been taken by the Calmucks, and sold in Turkey, had been purchased by the grand seignior, and sent back by that emperor as the most acceptable present he could make to his majesty; not that the Ottoman pride condescended to pay homage to the glory of Charles XII. but because the sultan, the natural enemy of the Russian and German emperors, was willing to fortify himself against them by the friendship of Sweden and the alliance of Poland. The ambassador complimented Stanislaus upon his accession to the throne; so that this king was acknowledged by Germany, France,

France, England, Spain, and Turkey. There remained only the pope, who, before he would acknowledge him, resolved to wait till time should have settled on his head that crown of which a reverse of fortune might easily deprive it.

Charles had no sooner given audience to the ambassador of the Ottoman Porte, than he went in pursuit of the Muscovites. The Russians, in the course of the war, had quitted Poland and returned to it above twenty different times. That country, which is open on all sides, and has no places of strength to cut off the retreat of an army, gave the Muscovites an opportunity of sometimes revisiting the very spot where they had formerly been beat, and even of penetrating as far into the heart of the kingdom as the conqueror himself. While Charles remained in Saxony, the czar had advanced as far as Leopold, situated at the southern extremity of Poland. Charles was then at Grodno in Lithuania, an hundred leagues to the northward of Leopold.

He left Stanislaus in Poland to defend his new kingdom, with the assistance of ten thousand Swedes and that of his own subjects, against all his enemies, both foreign and domestic. He then put himself at the head of his cavalry, and marched amidst frost and snow to Grodno, in the month of January 1708.

He had already passed the Niemen, about two leagues from the town; and the czar as yet knew nothing of his march. Upon the first news of the approach of the Swedish army, the czar quits the town by the north gate, and Charles enters it by the south. Charles had only six hundred of his guards with him; the rest not being able to keep pace with his rapid march. The czar fled with

above two thousand men, from an apprehension that a whole army was entering Grodno. That very day he was informed by a Polish deserter, that he had abandoned the place to no more than six hundred men, and that the main body of the army was still at the distance of five leagues. He lost no time : he detached fifteen hundred horse, of his own troops in the evening, to surprise the king of Sweden in the town. This detachment, under favour of the darkness, arrived undiscovered at the first Swedish guard, which, tho' consisting only of thirty men, sustained, for half a quarter of an hour, the efforts of the whole fifteen hundred. The king, who happened to be at the other end of the town, flew to their assistance with the rest of his six hundred men ; upon which the Russians fled with precipitation. In a short time his army arrived, and he then set out in pursuit of the enemy. All the corps of the Russian army, dispersed through Lithuania, retired hastily into the palatinate of Minsky, near the frontiers of Muscovy, where their general rendezvous was appointed. The Swedes, who were likewise divided into several bodies, continued to pursue the enemy for more than thirty leagues. The fugitives and the pursuers made forced marches almost every day, though in the middle of winter. For a long time past all seasons of the year were become indifferent to the Swedes and Russians ; and the only difference between them now arose from the terror of Charles's arms.

From Grodno to the Boristhenes eastward, there is nothing but morasses, deserts, and immense forests. In the cultivated spots there are no provisions to be had, the peasants burying under ground all their grain, and whatever else can be pre-

preserved in these subterranean receptacles. In order to discover these hidden magazines, the earth must be pierced with long poles pointed with iron. The Muscovites and the Swedes alternately made use of these provisions; but they were not always to be found, and even then they were not sufficient.

The king of Sweden, who had foreseen these difficulties, had provided biscuit for the subsistence of his army, and nothing could stop him in his march. After having traversed the forest of Minsky, where he was every moment obliged to cut down trees in order to clear the road for his troops and baggage, he found himself, on the 25th of June 1708, on the banks of the river Berezine, opposite to Borislow.

In this place the czar had assembled the best part of his forces, and intrenched himself to great advantage. His design was to hinder the Swedes from crossing the river. Charles posted some regiments on the banks of the Berezine, over against Borislow, as if he meant to attempt a passage in the face of the enemy. Mean while he leads his army three leagues higher up the river, throws a bridge across it, cuts his way through a body of three thousand men who defended that pass, and, without halting, marches against the main body of the enemy. The Russians did not wait his approach, but decamped and retreated towards the Boristhenes, spoiling all the roads, and destroying every thing in their way, in order, at least, to retard the progress of the Swedes.

Charles surmounted every obstacle, and still advanced towards the Boristhenes. In his way he met with twenty thousand Muscovites, intrenched in a place called Hollofin, behind a morass, which

could not be approached without passing a river. Charles did not delay the attack till the rest of his infantry should arrive : he plunges into the water at the head of his foot-guards, and crosses the river and the morass, the water frequently reaching above his shoulders. While he was thus pressing forward to the enemy, he ordered his cavalry to go round the morass and take them in flank. The Muscovites, surprised that no barrier could defend them, were instantly routed by the king, who attacked them on foot, and by the Swedish cavalry.

The horse, having forced their way through the enemy, joined the king in the midst of the battle. He then mounted on horseback ; but some time after, observing in the field a young Swedish gentleman, named Gyllenstiern, for whom he had a great regard, wounded and unable to walk, he forced him to take his horse, and continued to command on foot at the head of his infantry. Of all the battles he had ever fought, this was perhaps the most glorious ; this was the one in which he encountered the greatest dangers, and displayed the most consummate skill and prudence. The memory of it is still preserved by a medal, with this inscription on one side, *Sylvæ, palud. s, aggeres, hostes victi* * : and on the other this verse of Lucan, *Victrices copias alium laturus in orbem* †.

The Russians, chased from all their posts, repassed the Boristhenes, which divides Poland from Muscovy. Charles did not give over the pursuit ; but followed them across the Boristhenes, which

* Woods, marshes, mounds, and enemies conquered.

† Wasting his warlike troops to other worlds.

he passed at Mohilou, the last town of Poland, and which sometimes belongs to the Poles, and sometimes to the Russians; a fate common to frontier places.

The czar thus seeing his empire, where he had lately established the polite arts and a flourishing trade, exposed to a war, which, in a short time, might overturn all his mighty projects, and perhaps deprive him of his crown, began to think seriously of peace; and accordingly ventured to make some proposals for that purpose, by means of a Polish gentleman, whom he sent to the Swedish army. Charles XII. who had not been used to grant peace to his enemies, except in their own capitals, replied, "I will treat with the czar at Moscow." When this haughty answer was reported to the czar, "My brother Charles (says he) always affects to act the Alexander; but, I flatter myself, he will not find in me another Darius."

From Mohilou, the place where the king passed the Boristhenes, as you advance towards the north, along the banks of that river, and always on the frontiers of Poland and Muscovy, you meet with the country of Smolensko, through which lies the great road that leads from Poland to Muscovy. This way the czar directed his flight; and the king pursued him by long marches. Part of the Russian rear-guard was frequently engaged with the dragoons of the Swedish van-guard. The latter had generally the advantage; but they weakened themselves even by conquering in these small skirmishes, which were never decisive, and in which they always lost a number of men.

On the 22d of September 1708, the king attacked, near Smolensko, a body of ten thousand horse, and six thousand Calmucks.

These

These Calmucks are Tartars, living between the kingdom of Astracan, which is subject to the czar, and that of Samarcande, belonging to the Usbeck Tartars, and the country of Timur, known by the name of Tamerlane. The country of the Calmucks extends eastward to the mountains which divide the mogul from the western parts of Asia. Those who inhabit that part of the country which borders upon Astracan are tributary to the czar, who pretends to an absolute authority over them; but their vagrant life hinders him from making good his claim, and obliges him to treat them in the same manner in which the grand seignior treats the Arabs, sometimes conniving at, and sometimes punishing their robberies. There are always some of these Calmucks in the Russian army; and the czar had even reduced them to a regular discipline, like the rest of his soldiers.

The king attacked these troops with only six regiments of horse, and four thousand foot; broke their ranks at the first onset, at the head of his Ostrogothick regiment, and obliged them to fly. He pursued them thro' rugged and hollow ways, where the Calmucks lay concealed, who soon began to shew themselves and cut off the regiment in which the king fought from the rest of the Swedish army. In an instant the Russians and Calmucks surrounded this regiment, and penetrated even to the king. Two aids de camp who fought near him fell at his feet. The king's horse was killed under him; and as one of his equerries was presenting him with another, both the equerry and horse were struck dead upon the spot. Charles fought on foot, surrounded by some of his officers, who instantly flocked around him.

Many

Many of them were taken, wounded, or slain, or pushed to a great distance from the king by the crowds that assailed them; so that he was left at last with no more than five attendants. With his own hand he had killed above a dozen of the enemy, without receiving a single wound, owing to that surprising good fortune which had hitherto attended him, and upon which he always relied. At length a colonel, named Dardof, forced his way through the Calmucks, with a single company of his regiment, and arrived time enough to save the king. The rest of the Swedes put the Tartars to the sword. The army recovered its ranks; Charles mounted his horse, and, fatigued as he was, pursued the Russians for two leagues.

The conqueror was still in the great road to the capital of Muscovy. The distance from Smolensko, near which the battle was fought, to Moscow, is about an hundred French leagues; and the army began to be in want of provision. The officers earnestly entreated the king to wait till general Levenhaupt, who was coming up with a reinforcement of fifteen thousand men, should arrive. The king, who seldom indeed took counsel of any one, not only rejected this wholesome advice, but, to the great astonishment of all the army, quitted the road to Moscow, and began to march southwards towards the Ukraine, the country of the Cossacks, lying between Little Tartary, Poland, and Muscovy. This country extends about an hundred French leagues from south to north, and almost as many from east to west. It is divided into two parts, almost equal, by the Boristhenes, which runs from the north-west to the south-east. The chief town is called Bathurin, and is situated upon the little river
Sera.

Sem. The northern part of the Ukraine is rich and well cultivated. The southern, lying in the forty-eighth degree of latitude, is one of the most fertile countries in the world, and yet one of the most desolate. Its bad form of government stifles in embryo, as it were, all the blessings which nature, if properly encouraged, would shower down upon the inhabitants. The people of these cantons neither sow nor plant, because the Tartars of Budziack, Precop, and Moldavia, all of them free-booters and banditti, would rob them of their harvests.

Ukrania hath always aspired to liberty; but being surrounded by Muscovy, the dominions of the grand seignior, and Poland, it has been obliged to chuse a protector, and consequently a master, in one of these three states. The Ukrainians at first put themselves under the protection of the Poles, who treated them with great severity. They afterwards submitted to the Russians, who governed them with despotic sway. They had originally the privilege of electing a prince under the name of general; but they were soon deprived of that right; and their general was nominated by the court of Moscow.

The person who then filled that station was a Polish gentleman, named Mazeppa, and born in the palatinate of Podolia. He had been brought up as a page to John Casimir, and had received some tincture of learning in his court. An intrigue which he had had in his youth with the lady of a Polish gentleman, having been discovered, the husband caused him to be bound stark-naked upon a wild horse, and let him go in that condition. The horse, who had been brought out of Ukrania, returned to his own country, and carried

carried Mazeppa along with him, half-dead with hunger and fatigue. Some of the country-people gave him assistance; and he lived among them for a long time, and signalized himself in several excursions against the Tartars. The superiority of his knowledge gained him great respect among the Cossacks; and his reputation daily encreasing, the czar found it necessary to make him prince of Ukrania.

While he was one day at table with the czar at Moscow, the emperor proposed to him to discipline the Cossacks, and to render them more dependent. Mazeppa replied, that the situation of Ukrania, and the genius of the nation, were insuperable obstacles to such a scheme. The czar, who began to be over-heated with wine, and who had not always the command of his passions, called him a traitor, and threatened to have him empaled.

Mazeppa, on his return to Ukrania, formed the design of a revolt; and the execution of it was greatly facilitated by the Swedish army, which soon after appeared on his frontiers. He resolved to render himself independent, and to erect Ukrania and some other ruins of the Russian empire into a powerful kingdom. Brave, enterprizing, and indefatigable, though advanced in years, he entered into a secret league with the king of Sweden, to hasten the downfall of the czar, and to convert it to his own advantage.

The king appointed the rendezvous near the river Desna. Mazeppa promised to meet him there at the head of thirty thousand men, with ammunition and provisions, and all his treasures, which were immense. The Swedish army therefore continued its march on that side, to the great grief
of

of all the officers, who knew nothing of the king's treaty with the Cossacks. Charles sent orders to Levenhaupt to bring his troops and provisions with all possible dispatch into Ukrania, where he proposed to pass the winter, that, having once secured that country, he might the more easily conquer Muscovy in the ensuing spring; and, in the mean time, he advanced towards the river Desna, which falls into the Boristhenes at Kiou.

The obstructions they had hitherto found in their march were but trifling, in comparison of what they met with in this new road. They were obliged to cross a marshy forest fifty leagues in length. General Lagercron, who marched before with five thousand soldiers and pioneers, led the army astray to the eastward, thirty leagues from the right road. It was not till after a march of four days that the king discovered the mistake. With great difficulty they regained the main road; but almost all their artillery and waggons were lost, being either stuck fast, or quite sunk in the mud.

At last, after a march of twelve days, attended with so many vexatious and untoward circumstances, during which they had consumed the small quantity of biscuit that was left, the army, exhausted with hunger and fatigue, arrived on the banks of the Desna, in the very spot which Mazeppa had marked out as the place of rendezvous; but instead of meeting with that prince, they found a body of Muscovites advancing towards the other bank of the river. The king was astonished, but resolved immediately to pass the Desna and attack the enemy. The banks of the river were so steep, that they were obliged to let the soldiers down with ropes. They crossed it in
their

their usual manner, some on floats which were made in haste, and others by swimming. The body of Muscovites which arrived at the same time did not exceed eight thousand men; so that it made but little resistance, and this obstacle was also surmounted.

Charles advanced farther into this desolate country, alike uncertain of his road and of Mazeppa's fidelity. That Cossack appeared at last, but rather like a fugitive than a powerful ally. The Muscovites had discovered and defeated his design; they had fallen upon the Cossacks and cut them in pieces. His principal friends being taken sword in hand, had, to the number of thirty, been broke upon the wheel; his towns were reduced to ashes; his treasures plundered; the provisions he was preparing for the king of Sweden seized; and it was with great difficulty that he himself made his escape with six thousand men, and some horses laden with gold and silver. However he gave the king some hopes that he should be able to assist him by his intelligence in that unknown country, and by the affection of all the Cossacks, who being enraged against the Russians, flocked to the camp and supplied the army with provisions.

Charles hoped that general Levenhaupt at least would come and repair this misfortune. He was to bring with him about fifteen thousand Swedes, who were better than an hundred thousand Cossacks, together with ammunition and provisions. At length he arrived, in much the same condition with Mazeppa.

He had already passed the Boristhenes above Mohilou, and advanced twenty leagues beyond it, on the road to the Ukraine. He was bringing the king a convoy of eight thousand waggons,
with

with the money which he had levied in his march through Lithuania. As he approached the town of Lesno, near the conflux of the rivers Pronia and Sossa, which fall into the Boristhenes far below, the czar appeared at the head of near forty thousand men.

The Swedish general, who had not sixteen thousand complete, scorned to shelter himself in a fortified camp. A long train of victories had inspired the Swedes with so much confidence, that they never informed themselves of the number of their enemies, but only of the place where they lay. Accordingly, on the seventh of October 1708, in the afternoon, Levenhaupt advanced against them with great resolution. In the first attack the Swedes killed fifteen hundred Russians. The czar's army was thrown into confusion, and fled on all sides. The emperor of Russia saw himself upon the point of being entirely defeated. He was sensible that the safety of his dominions depended upon the success of this day, and that he would be utterly ruined, should Levenhaupt join the king of Sweden with a victorious army.

The moment he saw his troops begin to flinch, he ran to the rear guard, where the Cossacks and Calmucks were posted. "I charge you, said he to them, to fire upon every one that runs away, and even to kill me, should I be so cowardly as to fly." From thence he returned to the van guard, and rallied his troops in person, assisted by the princes Menzikoff and Gallicksin. Levenhaupt, who had received strict orders to rejoin his master, chose rather to continue his march than renew the battle, imagining he had done enough to prevent the enemy from pursuing him.

Next

Next morning, about eleven o'clock, the czar attacked him near a morass, and extended his lines with a view to surround him. The Swedes faced about on all sides; and the battle was maintained for the space of two hours with equal courage and obstinacy. The loss of the Muscovites was three times greater than that of the Swedes; the former, however, still kept their ground, and the victory was left undecided.

At four in the afternoon general Bayer brought the czar a reinforcement of troops. The battle was then renewed for the third time with more fury and eagerness than ever, and lasted till night put an end to the combat. At last superior numbers prevailed, the Swedes were broke, routed, and driven back to their baggage. Levenhaupt rallied his troops behind the waggons. The Swedes were conquered, but disdained to fly. They were still about nine thousand in number, and not so much as one of them deserted. The general drew them up with as much ease as if they had not been vanquished. The czar, on the other side, remained all night under arms; and forbad his officers, under pain of being cashiered, and his soldiers under pain of death, to leave their ranks for the sake of plunder.

Next morning at day-break, he ordered a fresh assault. Levenhaupt had retired to an advantageous situation, at the distance of a few miles, after having nailed up part of his cannon, and set fire to his waggons.

The Muscovites arrived time enough to prevent the whole convoy from being consumed by the flames. They seized about six thousand waggons, which they saved. The czar, desirous of completing the defeat of the Swedes, sent one
of

of his generals, named Phlug, to attack them again for the fifth time. That general offered them an honourable capitulation. Levenhaupt refused it, and fought a fifth battle, as bloody as any of the former. Of the nine thousand soldiers he had left, he lost about one half in this action, and the other remained unbroken. At last, night coming on, Levenhaupt, after having sustained five battles against forty thousand men, passed the Sossa with about five thousand soldiers that remained. The czar lost about ten thousand men in these five engagements, in which he had the glory of conquering the Swedes, and Levenhaupt that of disputing the victory for three days, and of effecting a retreat, without being obliged to surrender. Thus he arrived in his master's camp with the honour of having made such a noble defence; but bringing with him neither ammunition nor an army.

By these means Charles found himself destitute of provisions, cut off from all communication with Poland, and surrounded with enemies, in the heart of a country where he had no resource but his own courage.

In this extremity, the memorable winter of 1709, which was still more terrible in those quarters of the world than in France, destroyed part of his army. Charles resolved to brave the seasons, as he had done his enemies; and ventured to make long marches with his troops during this mortal cold. It was in one of these marches that two thousand men fell dead with cold before his eyes. The dragoons had no boots, and the foot soldiers were without shoes, and almost without cloaths. They were forced to make stockings of the skins of wild beasts, in the best

manner they could. They were frequently in want of bread. They were obliged to throw almost all their cannon into the marshes and rivers, for want of horses to draw them; so that this army, which was once so flourishing, was reduced to twenty-four thousand men ready to perish with hunger. They no longer received any news from Sweden, nor were able to send any thither. In this condition only one officer complained. "What, said the king to him, are you uneasy at being so far from your wife? If you are a good soldier, I will lead you to such a distance, that you shall hardly be able to receive news from Sweden once in three years."

The marquis de Brancas, afterwards ambassador in Sweden, told me, that a soldier ventured, in presence of the whole army, to present to the king, with an air of complaint, a piece of bread that was black and mouldy, made of barley and oats, which was the only food they then had, and of which they had not even a sufficient quantity. The king received the bit of bread without the least emotion, eat it up, and then said coldly to the soldier, "It is not good, but it may be eaten." This incident, trifling as it is, if indeed any thing that increases respect and confidence can be said to be trifling, contributed more than all the rest to make the Swedish army support those hardships, which would have been intolerable under any other general.

While he was in this situation, he at last received a packet from Stockholm, by which he was informed of the death of his sister, the dutchess of Holstein, who was carried off by the small pox, in the month of December 1708, in the twenty-seventh year of her age. She was a prin-

a princess as mild and gentle as her brother was imperious in his disposition, and implacable in his revenge. He had always entertained a great affection for her; and was the more afflicted with her death, that now beginning to taste of misfortunes himself, he was of course become the more susceptible of tender impressions.

By this packet he was likewise informed, that his they had raised money and troops, in obedience to orders; but nothing could reach his camp, as between him and Stockholm there were near five hundred leagues to travel, and an enemy superior in number to engage.

The czar, who was as active as the king of Sweden, after having sent some fresh troops to the assistance of the confederates in Poland, who under the command of general Siniauski, exerted their joint efforts against Stanislaus, immediately advanced into the Ukraine in the midst of this severe winter, to make head against his Swedish majesty. Then he continued to pursue the political scheme he had formed of weakening his enemy by petty rencounters, wisely judging that the Swedish army must in the end be entirely ruined, as it could not possibly be recruited. The cold must certainly have been very severe, as it obliged the two monarchs to agree to a suspension of arms. But on the first of February they renewed their military operations, in the midst of frost and snow.

After several slight skirmishes, and some losses, the king perceived in the month of April, that he had only eighteen thousand Swedes remaining. Mazeppa, the prince of the Cossacks, supplied them with provisions; without his assistance, the army must have perished with want and hunger. At

this conjuncture, the czar made proposals to Mazepa for submitting again to his authority. But whether it was that the terrible punishment of the wheel, by which his friends had perished, made the Cossack apprehend the same danger for himself, or that he was desirous of revenging their death, he continued faithful to his new ally.

Charles, with his eighteen thousand Swedes, had neither laid aside the design nor the hopes of penetrating to Moscow. Towards the end of May he laid siege to Pultowa, upon the river Vorokla, at the eastern extremity of the Ukraine, and thirty leagues from the Boristhenes. This country is inhabited by the Zaporavians, the most remarkable people in the universe. They are a collection of ancient Russians, Poles, and Tartars, professing a species of Christianity, and exercising a kind of free-booting, somewhat a-kin to that of the buccaneers. They chuse a chief, whom they frequently depose or strangle. They allow no women to live among them; but they carry off all the children for twenty or thirty leagues around, and bring them up in their own manners. The summer they always pass in the open fields; in winter they shelter themselves in large barns, containing four or five thousand men. They fear nothing; they live free; they brave death for the smallest booty, with as much intrepidity as Charles XII. did, in order to obtain the power of bestowing crowns. The czar gave them sixty thousand florins, hoping by this means to engage them in his interest. They took his money; and, influenced by the powerful eloquence of Mazepa, declared in favour of Charles XII. but their service was of very little consequence,

as they think it the most egregious folly to fight for any thing but plunder. It was no small advantage, however, that they were prevented from doing harm. The number of their troops was, at most, but about two thousand. One morning ten of their chiefs were presented to the king; but it was with great difficulty they could be prevailed upon to remain sober, as they commonly begin the day by getting drunk. They were brought to the intrenchments, where they shewed their dexterity in firing with long carbines; for being placed upon the mounds, they killed such of the enemy as they picked out at the distance of two hundred paces. To these banditti Charles added some thousands of Walachians, whom he had hired from the cham of Little Tartary; and thus laid siege to Pultowa, with all these troops of Zaporavians, Cossacks, and Walachians, which joined to his eighteen thousand Swedes, composed an army of about thirty thousand men; but an army in a wretched condition, and in want of every thing. The czar had formed a magazine in Pultowa. If the king should take it, he would open himself a way to Muscovy; and be able at least, amidst the great abundance he would then possess, to wait the arrival of the succours which he still expected from Sweden, Livonia, Pomerania, and Poland. His only resource therefore being in the conquest of Pultowa, he pressed the siege of it with great vigour. Mazeppa, who carried on a correspondence with some of the citizens, assured him that he would soon be master of it; and this assurance revived the hopes of the soldiers, who considered the taking of Pultowa as the end of all their miseries.

The king perceived, from the beginning of the siege, that he had taught his enemies the art of war. In spite of all his precautions, prince Menzikoff threw some fresh troops into the town; by which means the garrison was rendered almost five thousand strong.

They made several sallies, and sometimes with success: they likewise sprung a mine; but what saved the town from being taken was the approach of the czar, who was advancing with seventy thousand men. Charles went to reconnoitre them on the twenty-seventh of May, which happened to be his birth-day, and beat one of their detachments; but as he was returning to his camp, he received a shot from a carbine, which pierced his boot and shattered the bone of his heel. There was not the least alteration observable in his countenance, from which it could be suspected that he had received a wound. He continued to give his orders with great composure, and after this accident remained almost six hours on horseback. One of his domesticks observing that the sole of the king's boot was bloody, made haste to call the surgeons; and the pain was now become so exquisite, that they were obliged to assist him in dismounting, and to carry him to his tent. The surgeons examined the wound, and were of opinion that the leg must be cut off, which threw the army into the utmost consternation. But one of the surgeons, named Newman, who had more skill and courage than the rest, affirmed, that by making deep incisions he could save the king's leg. "Fall to work then presently, said the king to him: cut boldly, and fear nothing." He himself held the leg with both his hands, and beheld the incisions that were made

in it, as if the operation had been performed upon another person.

As they were laying on the dressing, he ordered an assault to be made the next morning; but he had hardly given these orders, when he was informed that the whole army of the enemy was advancing against him; in consequence of which he was obliged to alter his resolution. Charles, wounded and incapable of acting, saw himself cooped up between the Boristhenes and the river that runs to Pultowa, in a desert country, without any places of security, or ammunition, in the face of an army, which at once cut off his retreat, and prevented his being supplied with provisions. In this extremity, he did not assemble a council of war, as, considering the perplexed situation of his affairs, he ought to have done; but on the seventh or eighth of July, in the evening, he sent for velt-mareschal Renschild to his tent; and without deliberation, or the least discomposure, ordered him to make the necessary dispositions for attacking the czar next day. Renschild made no objections, and went to carry his orders into execution. At the door of the king's tent he met count Piper, with whom he had long lived on very bad terms, as frequently happens between the minister and the general. Piper asked him if he had any news: No, said the general coldly, and passed on to give his orders. As soon as count Piper had entered the tent; "Has Renschild told you nothing?" said the king: "Nothing," replied Piper: "Well then, resumed he, I tell you, that we shall give battle to-morrow." Count Piper was astonished at such a desperate resolution; but well knowing that it was impossible to make his master change his mind,

mind, he expressed his surprize only by his silence, and left Charles to sleep till break of day.

It was on the eighth of July 1709, that the decisive battle of Pultowa was fought between the two most famous monarchs that were then in the world. Charles XII. illustrious for nine years of victories; Peter Alexiowitz for nine years of pains taken to form troops equal to those of Sweden: the one glorious for having given away dominions; the other for having civilized his own: Charles, fond of dangers, and fighting for glory alone: Alexiowitz scorning to fly from danger, and never making war but from interested views: the Swedish monarch liberal from an innate greatness of soul*; the Muscovite never granting favours but in order to serve some particular people: the former a prince of uncommon sobriety and continence, naturally magnanimous, and never cruel but once; the latter having not yet worn off the roughness of his education, or the barbarity of his country, as much the object of terror to his subjects as of admiration to strangers, and too prone to excesses, which even shortened his days. Charles had the title of "Invincible," of which a single

* We cannot perceive the least tincture of liberality or greatness of soul in Charles. He might indeed have made himself king of Poland by dint of violence; but the consequence of that violence would have disabled him from gratifying his revenge, which seems to have been the predominant passion of his soul. Had he ascended the throne of Poland, he must have maintained an army of Swedes in that kingdom, consequently he could not have advanced to the banks of the Boristhenes in pursuit of Peter Alexiowitz. We find in Charles an insensibility of danger, a contempt of wealth, a clownishness of manners, a brutality of disposition, an implacable thirst of revenge and dominion; without taste, sentiment, or humanity.

moment might deprive him; the neighbouring nations had already given Peter Alexiowitz the name of "Great;" which, as he did not owe it to his victories, he could not forfeit by a defeat.

In order to form a distinct idea of this battle, and the place where it was fought, we must figure to ourselves Pultowa on the north, the camp of the king of Sweden on the south, stretching a little towards the east, his baggage about a mile behind him, and the river of Pultowa on the north of the town, running from east to west.

The czar had passed the river about a league from Pultowa, towards the west, and was beginning to form his camp.

At break of day the Swedes appeared before the trenches with four iron cannons for their whole artillery; the rest were left in the camp, with about three thousand men, and four thousand remained with the baggage: so that the Swedish army which advanced against the enemy, consisted of about one and twenty thousand men, of which about sixteen thousand only were regular troops.

The generals Renschild, Roos, Levenhaupt, Slipenbak, Hoorn, Sparre, Hamilton, the prince of Wirtemberg, the king's relation, and some others, who had most of them seen the battle of Narva, put the subaltern officers in mind of that day, when eight thousand Swedes defeated an army of eighty thousand Muscovites in their intrenchments. The officers exhorted the soldiers by the same motive, and as they advanced they all encouraged one another.

Charles, carried in a litter at the head of his infantry, conducted the march. A party of horse
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advanced by his orders to attack that of the enemy; and the battle began with this engagement at half an hour past four in the morning. The enemy's horse was posted towards the west, on the right side of the Russian camp. Prince Menzikoff and count Gallowin had placed them at certain distances between redoubts lined with cannon. General Slipenbak, at the head of the Swedes, rushed upon them. All those who have served in the Swedish troops are sensible that it is almost impossible to withstand the fury of their first attack. The Muscovite squadrons were broken and routed. The czar ran up to rally them in person; his hat was pierced with a musket ball; Menzikoff had three horses killed under him; and the Swedes cried out, Victory.

Charles did not doubt but the battle was gained. About midnight he had sent general Creuts with five thousand horse or dragoons to take the enemy in flank, while he attacked them in front; but as his ill fortune would have it, Creuts mistook his way, and did not make his appearance. The czar, who thought he was ruined, had time to rally his cavalry, and in his turn fell upon that of the king, which, not being supported by the detachment of Creuts, was likewise broken. Slipenbak was taken prisoner in this engagement. At the same time seventy-two pieces of cannon played from the camp upon the cavalry; and the Russian foot opening their lines, advanced to attack Charles's infantry.

After this the czar detached prince Menzikoff to go and take post between Pultowa and the Swedes. Prince Menzikoff executed his master's orders with dexterity and expedition. He not only cut off the communication between the Swe-

dish army and the camp before Pultowa; but having met with a corps de reserve, he surrounded them and cut them in pieces. If Menzikoff performed this exploit of his own accord, Russia is indebted to him for its preservation: if it was by the orders of the czar, he was an adversary worthy of Charles XII. Mean while the Russian infantry came out of their lines, and advanced into the plain in order of battle. On the other hand, the Swedish cavalry rallied within a quarter of a league from the enemy; and the king, assisted by velt-mareschal Renschild, made the necessary dispositions for a general engagement.

He ranged the few troops that were left him in two lines, his infantry occupying the center and his cavalry forming the two wings. The czar disposed his army in the same manner. He had the advantage of numbers, and of seventy-two pieces of cannon, while the Swedes had no more than four to oppose to him, and began to be in want of powder.

The emperor of Muscovy was in the center of his army, having then only the title of major-general, and seemed to obey general Zermetoff. But he rode from rank to rank in the character of emperor, mounted on a Turkish horse, which had been given him in a present by the grand signor, animating the captains and soldiers, and promising rewards to them all.

At nine in the morning the battle was renewed. One of the first discharges of the Russian cannon carried off the two horses of Charles's litter. He caused two others to be immediately put to it. A second discharge broke the litter in pieces, and overturned the king. Of four and twenty Drabants, who mutually relieved each other in carrying

rying him, one and twenty were killed. The Swedes, struck with consternation, began to stagger; and the cannon of the enemy continuing to mow them down, the first line fell back upon the second, and the second began to fly. In this last action it was only a single line of ten thousand Russian infantry that routed the Swedish army: so much were matters changed!

All the Swedish writers alledge, that they would have gained the battle, if they had not committed several blunders; but all the officers affirm that it was a great blunder to give battle at all, and a greater still to shut themselves up in a desert country, against the advice of the most prudent generals, in opposition to a warlike enemy, three times stronger than Charles, both in number of men, and in the many resources from which the Swedes were entirely cut off. The remembrance of Narva was the chief cause of Charles's misfortune at Pultowa.

The prince of Wirtemberg, general Renschild, and several principal officers were already made prisoners; the camp before Pultowa was stormed; and all was thrown into a confusion which it was impossible to rectify. Count Piper, with some officers of the chancery, had left the camp, and neither knew what to do, nor what was become of the king; but ran about from one corner of the field to another. A major, called Bere, offered to conduct them to the baggage; but the clouds of dust and smoke which covered the plain, and the dissipation of mind so natural amidst such a desolation, brought them straight to the counterescarp of the town, where they were all made prisoners by the garrison.

The king scorned to fly, and yet was unable to defend himself. General Poniatowsky happened to be near him at that instant. He was a colonel of Stanislaus's Swedish guards, a man of extraordinary merit, and had been induced, from his strong attachment to the person of Charles, to follow him into the Ukraine, without any post in the army. He was a man, who, in all the occurrences of life, and amidst those dangers when others would at most have displayed their courage, always took his measures with dispatch, prudence, and success. He made a sign to two Drabants, who took the king under the arm, and placed him on his horse, notwithstanding the exquisite pain of his wounds.

Poniatowsky, though he had no command in the army, became on this occasion a general thro' necessity, and drew up five hundred horse near the king's person; some of them Drabants, others officers, and a few private troopers. This body being assembled and animated by the misfortune of their prince, forced their way through more than ten Russian regiments, and conducted Charles through the midst of the enemy for the space of a league, to the baggage of the Swedish army.

Charles, being closely pursued in his flight, had his horse killed under him; and colonel Gieta, though wounded and spent with loss of blood, gave him his. Thus in the course of the flight they twice put this conqueror on horseback, though he had not been able to mount a horse during the engagement.

This surprising retreat was of great consequence in such distressful circumstances; but he was obliged to fly to a still greater distance. They found count Piper's coach among the baggage;
for

for the king had never used one since he left Stockholm : they put him into this vehicle, and fled towards the Boristhenes with great precipitation. The king, who, from the time of his being set on horseback till his arrival at the baggage, had not spoke a single word, at length enquired, what was become of count Piper ? They told him he was taken prisoner, with all the officers of the chancery. " And general Renschild and the duke of Wirtemberg ?" added the king. " Yes," says Poniatowsky. " Prisoners to the Russians !" resumed Charles, shrugging up his shoulders ; " Come then, let us rather go to the Turks." They could not perceive, however, the least mark of dejection in his countenance ; and had any one seen him at that time, without knowing his situation, he would never have suspected that he was conquered and wounded.

While he was getting off, the Russians seized his artillery in the camp before Pultowa, his baggage, and his military-chest, in which they found six millions in specie, the spoils of Poland and Saxony. Nine thousand men, partly Swedes and partly Cossacks, were killed in the battle, and about six thousand taken prisoners. There still remained about sixteen thousand men, including the Swedes, Poles, and Cossacks, who fled towards the Boristhenes, under the conduct of general Levenhaupt. He marched one way with these fugitive troops ; and the king took another road with some of his horse. The coach in which he rode broke down by the way, and they again set him on horseback : and, to complete his misfortune, he wandered all night in a wood ; where, his courage being no longer able to support his exhausted spirits, the pain of his wound becoming

more intolerable through fatigue, and his horse falling under him through excessive weariness, he lay some hours at the foot of a tree, in danger of being surprised every moment by the conquerors, who were searching for him on all sides.

At last, on the 9th or 10th of July, at night, he found himself on the banks of the Boristhenes. Levenhaupt had just arrived with the shattered remains of the army. It was with an equal mixture of joy and sorrow that the Swedes again beheld their king, whom they thought to be dead. The enemy was approaching. The Swedes had neither a bridge to pass the river, nor time to make one, nor powder to defend themselves, nor provisions to support an army, which had eat nothing for two days. But the remains of this army were Swedes, and the conquered king was Charles XII. Most of the officers imagined, that they were to halt there for the Russians, without flinching; and that they would either conquer or die on the banks of the Boristhenes. Charles would undoubtedly have taken this resolution, had he not been exhausted with weakness. His wound was now come to a suppuration, attended with a fever; and it hath been remarked, that men of the greatest intrepidity, when seized with the fever that is common in a suppuration, lose that impulse to valour, which, like all other virtues, requires the direction of a clear head. Charles was no longer himself. This, at least, is what I have been well assured of, and what indeed is extremely probable. They carried him along like a sick person in a state of insensibility. Happily there was still left a sorry calash, which by chance they had brought along with them: this they put on board of a little boat; and the king and general

neral Mazeppa embarked in another. The latter had saved several coffers full of money; but the current being rapid, and a violent wind beginning to blow, the Cossack threw more than three fourths of his treasures into the river to lighten the boat. Mullern, the king's chancellor, and count Poniatowsky, a man more necessary to the king than ever, on account of his admirable dexterity in finding expedients for all difficulties, crossed over in other barks with some officers. Three hundred troopers of the king's guards, and a great number of Poles and Cossacks, trusting to the goodness of their horses, ventured to pass the river by swimming. Their troop keeping close together, resisted the current, and broke the waves; but all those who attempted to pass separately, a little below, were carried down by the stream, and sunk in the river. Of all the foot who attempted to pass, there was not a single man that reached the other side.

While the shattered remains of the army were in this extremity, prince Menzikoff came up with ten thousand horsemen, having each a foot-soldier behind him. The carcasses of the Swedes who had died by the way, of their wounds, fatigue, and hunger, shewed prince Menzikoff but too plainly the road which the fugitive army had taken. The prince sent a trumpet to the Swedish general, to offer him a capitulation. Four general officers were 'presently dispatched by Levenhaupt to receive the commands of the conqueror. Before that day, sixteen thousand soldiers of king Charles would have attacked the whole forces of the Russian empire, and would have perished to a man rather than surrender. But after the loss of
a battle,

a battle and a flight of two days, deprived of the presence of their prince, who was himself constrained to fly, the strength of every soldier being exhausted, and their courage no longer supported by the least prospect of relief, the love of life overcame their natural intrepidity. Colonel Troutfetre alone, observing the Muscovites approach, began to advance with one Swedish battalion to attack them, hoping by this means to induce the rest of the troops to follow his example. But Levenhaupt was obliged to oppose this unavailing ardour. The capitulation was settled, and the whole army were made prisoners of war. Some soldiers, reduced to despair at the thoughts of falling into the hands of the Muscovites, threw themselves into the Boristhenes. Two officers of the regiment commanded by the brave Troutfetre, killed each other, and the rest were made slaves. They all filed off in presence of prince Menzikoff, laying their arms at his feet, as thirty thousand Muscovites had done nine years before at those of the king of Sweden, at Narva. But whereas the king sent back all the Russians, whom he did not fear, the czar retained the Swedes that were taken at Pultowa.

These unhappy creatures were afterwards dispersed through the czar's dominions, particularly in Siberia, a vast province of Great Tartary, which extends eastward to the frontiers of the Chinese empire. In this barbarous country, where even the use of bread was unknown, the Swedes, who were become ingenious through necessity, exercised the trades and employments of which they had the least notion. All the distinctions which fortune makes among men were there banished.

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The officer, who could not follow any trade, was obliged to cleave and carry wood for the soldier, now turned taylor, clothier, joiner, mason, or goldsmith, and who got a subsistence by his labour. Some of the officers became painters, and others architects. Some of them taught the languages and mathematics. They even established some public schools, which in time became so useful and famous, that the citizens of Moscow sent their children thither for education.

Count Piper, the king of Sweden's first minister, was for a long time confined in prison at Petersburg. The czar was persuaded, as well as the rest of Europe, that this minister had sold his master to the duke of Marlborough, and drawn on Muscovy the arms of Sweden, which might have given peace to Europe; for which reason he rendered his confinement the more severe. Piper died in Muscovy a few years after, little assisted by his own family, which lived in opulence at Stockholm, and vainly lamented by his sovereign, who would never condescend to offer a ransom for his minister, which he feared the czar would not accept of, for no cartel of exchange had ever been settled between them.

The emperor of Muscovy, elated with a joy which he was at no pains to conceal, received upon the field of battle the prisoners, whom they brought to him in crowds; and asked every moment, "Where then is my brother Charles?"

He did the Swedish generals the honour of inviting them to dine with him. Among other questions which he put to them, he asked general Renschild, what might be the number of his master's troops before the battle? Renschild answered,

ed, That the king always kept the muster-roll himself, and would never shew it to any one; but that, for his own part, he imagined the whole might be about thirty thousand, of which eighteen thousand were Swedes, and the rest Cossacks. The czar seemed to be surprised, and asked how they durst venture to penetrate into so distant a country, and lay siege to Pultowa with such a handful of men? "We were not always consulted, (replied the Swedish general;) but, like faithful servants, we obeyed our master's orders, without ever presuming to contradict them." The czar, upon receiving this answer, turned about to some of his courtiers, who were formerly suspected of having engaged in a conspiracy against him: "Ah! (says he) see how a king should be served;" and then taking a glass of wine, "To the health (says he) of my masters in the art of war." Renschild asked him who were the persons whom he honoured with so high a title? "You, gentlemen, the Swedish generals," replied the czar. "Your majesty then (resumed the count) is very ungrateful, to treat your masters with so much severity." After dinner the czar caused their swords to be restored to all the general officers, and behaved to them like a prince who had a mind to give his subjects a lesson of generosity and politeness, with which he was well acquainted. But this same prince, who treated the Swedish generals with so much humanity, caused all the Cossacks that fell into his hands to be broke upon the wheel.

Thus the Swedish army, which left Saxony in such a triumphant manner, was now no more. One half of them had perished with hunger, and the other half were either massacred or made slaves.

slaves. Charles XII. had lost in one day the fruit of nine years labour, and of almost an hundred battles. He made his escape in a wretched calash, attended by major-general Hoord, who was dangerously wounded. The rest of his little troop followed, some on foot, some on horseback, and others in waggons, through a desert, where neither huts, tents, men, beasts, nor roads were to be seen. Every thing was wanting, even to water itself. It was now the beginning of July; the country lay in the forty-seventh degree of latitude; the dry sand of the desert rendered the heat of the sun the more insupportable; the horses fell by the way; and the men were ready to die with thirst. A brook of muddy water which they found towards evening was all they met with; they filled some bottles with this water, which saved the lives of the king's little troop. After a march of five days, he at last found himself on the banks of the river Hypanis, now called Bogh by the barbarians, who have spoiled not only the general face, but even the very names of those countries, which once flourished so nobly in the possession of the Greek colonies. This river joins the Boristhenes some miles lower, and falls along with it into the Black Sea.

On the other side of the Bogh, towards the south, stands the little town of Oczakou, a frontier of the Turkish empire. The inhabitants seeing a body of soldiers approach, to whose dress and language they were entire strangers, refused to carry them over the river, without an order from Mehemet Basha, governor of Oczakou. The king sent an express to the governor, demanding a passage; but the Turk not knowing what to do, in a
country

country where one false step frequently costs a man his life, durst not venture to take any thing upon himself, without having first obtained permission of the seraskier of the province, who resides at Bender in Bessarabia. While they were waiting for this permission, the Russians who had made the king's army prisoners had crossed the Boristhenes, and were approaching to take him also. At last the basha of Oczakou sent word to the king, that he would furnish him with one small boat, to transport himself and two or three of his attendants. In this extremity the Swedes took by force what they could not obtain by gentle means: some of them went over to the further side in a small skiff, seized on some boats, and brought them to the hither bank of the river. And happy was it for them that they did so; for the masters of the Turkish barks, fearing they should lose such a favourable opportunity of getting a good freight, came in crouds to offer their service. At that very instant arrived the favourable answer of the seraskier of Bender; and the king had the mortification to see five hundred of his men seized by the enemy, whose insulting bravadoes he even heard. The basha of Oczakou, by means of an interpreter, asked his pardon for the delays which had occasioned the loss of these five hundred men, and humbly entreated him not to complain of it to the grand seignior. Charles promised him that he would not; but at the same time gave him a severe reprimand, as if he had been speaking to one of his own subjects.

The commander of Bender, who was likewise seraskier, a title which answers to that of general, and basha of the province, which signifies governor

vernor and intendant, forthwith sent an aga to compliment the king, and to offer him a magnificent tent, with provision, baggage, waggons, and all the conveniencies, officers, and attendant, necessary to conduct him to Bender in a splendid manner; for it is the custom of the Turks, not only to defray the charges of ambassadors to the place of their residence, but likewise to supply, with great liberality, the necessities of those princes who take refuge among them, during the time of their stay.

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T H E C O N T E N T S .

State of the OTTOMAN PORTE. CHARLES resides near BENDER : His Employments : His Intrigues at the PORTE : His Designs. AUGUSTUS restored to his Throne. The King of DENMARK makes a Descent upon SWEDEN. All the other Dominions of CHARLES are invaded. The Czar enters Moscow in Triumph. Affair of PRUTH. History of the Czarina, who from a Country-girl became Empress.

A CHMET III. was at that time emperor of the Turks. He had been placed upon the throne in 1703, by a revolution not unlike to that which transferred the crown of England from James II. to his son-in-law William. Mustapha being governed by his mufti, who was hated by all the Turks, provoked the whole empire to rise against him. His army, by the assistance of which he hoped to punish the malecontents, went over
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to the rebels. He was seized, and deposed in form; and his brother taken from the seraglio and advanced to the throne, almost without spilling a single drop of blood. Achmet shut up the deposed sultan in the seraglio at Constantinople, where he lived for several years, to the great astonishment of Turkey, which had been wont to see the dethronement of her princes always followed by their death.

The new sultan, as the only recompence for a crown which he owed to the ministers, to the generals, to the officers of the janissaries, and in a word to those who had had any hand in the revolution, put them all to death, one after another, for fear they should one day attempt a second revolution. By sacrificing so many brave men, he weakened the strength of the nation; but established his throne, at least for some years. The next object of his attention was to amass riches. He was the first of the Ottoman race that ventured to make a small alteration in the current coin, and to impose new taxes; but he was obliged to drop both these enterprizes, for fear of an insurrection. The rapacity and tyranny of the grand seignior are seldom felt by any but the officers of the empire, who, whatever they may be in other respects, are domestic slaves to the sultan; but the rest of the Mussulmans live in profound tranquillity, secure of their liberty, their lives, and fortunes*.

Such

* We are surprised to hear our author still harping upon this string, namely, the liberty and security which the Turks enjoy; as it is well known that these miserable creatures are every day subject to be pillaged and massacred by the

Such was the Turkish emperor to whom the king of Sweden fled for refuge. As soon as he set foot on the sultan's territories, he wrote him a letter, which bears date the 13th of July 1709. Several copies of this letter were spread abroad, all of which are now held to be spurious; but of all those I have seen, there is not one but what sufficiently marks the natural haughtiness of the author, and is more suitable to his courage than his condition. The sultan did not return him an answer till towards the end of September. The pride of the Ottoman Porte made Charles sensible what a mighty difference there was between a Turkish emperor and a king of part of Scandinavia, a conquered and fugitive Christian. For the rest, all these letters, which kings seldom write themselves, are but vain formalities, which neither serve to discover the characters of princes, nor the state of their affairs.

Though Charles XII. was in reality no better than a prisoner honourably treated in Turkey, he yet formed the design of arming the Ottoman empire against his enemies. He flattered himself that he should be able to reduce Poland under the yoke, and subdue Russia. He had an envoy at Constantinople; but the person that served him most effectually in his vast projects, was the count de Poniatowsky, who went to Constantinople without a commission, and soon rendered himself necessary to the king, agreeable to the Porte, and at last dangerous even to the grand viziers*.

the soldiery; to be oppressed, stripped, and often punished with death by the officers of justice, even without form of trial.

* It was from this nobleman I received not only the remarks which have been published, and of which the chaplain Norberg hath made use, but likewise several other manuscripts relating to this history.

One

One of those who seconded his designs with the greatest activity, was the physician Fonseca, a Portuguese Jew, settled at Constantinople, a man of knowledge and address, well qualified for the management of business, and perhaps the only philosopher of his nation. His profession procured him a free access to the Ottoman Porte, and frequently gained him the confidence of the viziers. With this gentleman I was very well acquainted at Paris; and all the particulars I am going to relate were, he assured me, unquestionable truths. Count Poniatowsky hath informed me, both by letters and by word of mouth, that he had the address to convey some letters to the sultane's Valide, the mother of the reigning emperor, who had formerly been ill-used by her son, but now began to recover her influence in the seraglio. A Jewess, who was often admitted to this princess, was perpetually recounting to her the exploits of the king of Sweden, and charmed her ear by these relations. The sultane's, moved by that secret inclination with which most women feel themselves inspired in favour of extraordinary men, even without having seen them, openly espoused the king's cause in the seraglio. She called him by no other name than that of her lion: "And when will you (would she sometimes say to the sultan her son,) when will you help my lion to devour this czar?" She even dispensed with the rules of the seraglio, so far as to write several letters with her own hand to count Poniatowsky, in whose custody they still are, at the time of my writing this history.

Mean while the king was honourably conducted to Bender, thro' the desert that was formerly called the Wilderness of the Getæ. The Turks
took

took care that nothing should be wanting on the road, to render his journey agreeable. A great many Poles, Swedes, and Cossacks, who had escaped from the Muscovites, came by different ways to increase his train on the road. By the time he reached Bender he had eighteen hundred men, who were all maintained and lodged, both they and their horses, at the expence of the grand seignior.

The king chose to encamp near Bender, rather than lodge in the town. The seraskier Jussuf basha caused a magnificent tent to be erected for him; and tents were likewise provided for all the lords of his retinue. Some time after, Charles built a house in this place; the officers followed his example; and the soldiers raised barracks; so that his camp insensibly became a little town. As the king was not yet cured of his wound, he was obliged to have a carious bone extracted from his foot. But as soon as he could mount a horse, he resumed his wonted labours, always rising before the sun, tiring three horses a-day, and exercising his soldiers. By way of amusement, he sometimes played at chess; and, as the characters of men are often discovered by the most trifling incidents, it may not be improper to observe, that he always advanced the king first at that game, and made greater use of him than of any of the other men; by which he was always a loser.

At Bender he had all the necessaries of life in great abundance, a felicity that seldom falls to the lot of a conquered and fugitive prince; for besides the more than sufficient quantity of provisions, and the five hundred crowns a-day, which he received from the Ottoman munificence, he drew some money from France, and borrowed of
the

the merchants at Constantinople. Part of this money was employed in forwarding his intrigues in the seraglio, in buying the favours of the viziers, or procuring their ruin. The rest he squandered away with great profusion among his own officers and the janissaries who composed his guards at Bender. The dispenser of these acts of liberality was Grothusen, his favourite, a man, who, contrary to the custom of persons in that station, was as fond of giving as his master. He once brought him an account of sixty thousand crowns in two lines; ten thousand crowns given to the Swedes and janissaries by the generous orders of his majesty, and the rest eat up by myself: "It is thus (says the king) that I would have my friends to give in their accompts. Mullern makes me read whole pages for the sum of ten thousand livres. I like the laconic stile of Grothusen much better." One of his old officers, who was suspected of being somewhat covetous, complained that his majesty gave all to Grothusen: "I give money (replies the king) to none but those who know how to use it." This generosity frequently reduced him to such a low ebb, that he had not wherewithal to give. A better oeconomy in his acts of generosity would have been as much for his honour, and more for his interest; but it was the failing of this prince to carry all the virtues beyond the due bounds.

Great numbers of strangers went from Constantinople to see him. The Turks and the neighbouring Tartars came thither in crouds: all respected and admired him. His inflexible resolution to abstain from wine, and his regularity in assisting twice a-day at public prayers, made them

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say that he was a true Muffulman, and inspired them with an ardent desire of marching along with him to the conquest of Muscovy.

During his abode at Bender, which was much longer than he expected, he insensibly acquired a taste for reading. Baron Fabricius, a gentleman of the bed-chamber to the duke of Holstein, a young man of an amiable character, who possessed that gaiety of temper, and easy turn of wit, which is so agreeable to princes, was the person who engaged him in these literary amusements. He had been sent to reside with him at Bender in the character of envoy, to take care of the interests of the young duke of Holstein; and he succeeded in his negotiations by his open and agreeable behaviour. He had read all the best French authors. He persuaded the king to read the tragedies of Peter Corneille, those of Racine, and the works of Despreaux. The king had no relish for the satires of the last author, which indeed are far from being his best pieces; but he was very fond of his other writings. When he read that passage of the eighth satire, where the author treats Alexander as a fool and a madman, he tore out the leaf.

Of all the French tragedies, Mithridates pleased him most, because the situation of that monarch, who, though vanquished, still breathed vengeance, was so similar to his own. He shewed Mr. Fabricius the passages that struck him; but would never read any of them aloud, nor ever hazard a single word in French. Nay, when he afterwards saw Mr. Desaleurs, the French ambassador at the Porte, a man of distinguished merit, but acquainted only with his mother-tongue, he answered him
in

in Latin; and when Mr. Desaleurs protested that he did not understand four words of that language, the king, rather than talk French, sent for an interpreter.

Such were the occupations of Charles XII. at Bender, where he waited till a Turkish army should come to his assistance. His envoy presented memorials in his name to the grand vizier; and Poniatowsky supported them with all his interest. This gentleman's address succeeded in every thing; he was always dressed in the Turkish fashion, and he had free access to every place. The grand seignior presented him with a purse of a thousand ducats, and the grand vizier said to him, "I will take your king in one hand, and a sword in the other; I will lead him to Moscow at the head of two hundred thousand men." The name of this grand vizier was Chourlouli Ali Basha; he was the son of a peasant of the village of Chourlou. Such an extraction is not reckoned a disgrace among the Turks, who have no ranks of nobility, neither that which is annexed to certain employments, nor that which consists in titles. With them the dignity and importance of a man's character depends entirely upon his personal services. This is a custom which prevails in most of the eastern countries; a custom extremely natural, and which might be productive of the most beneficial effects, if posts of honour were conferred on none but men of merit; but the viziers for the most part are no better than the creatures of a black eunuch, or a favourite female slave.

The first minister soon changed his mind. The king could do nothing but negotiate, and the czar could give money, which he distributed with

great profusion ; and he even employed the money of Charles XII. on this occasion. The military-chest which he took at Pultowa furnished him with new arms against the vanquished king ; and it was no longer the question at court, whether war should be made upon the Russians ? The interest of the czar was all-powerful at the Porte, which granted such honours to his envoy as the Muscovite ministers had never before enjoyed at Constantinople. They allowed him to have a *seraglio*, that is, a palace in the quarter of the Franks, who converse with the foreign ministers. The czar thought he might even demand that general Mazeppa should be put into his hands, as Charles XII. had caused the unhappy Patkul to be delivered up to him. Chourlouli Ali Basha could refuse nothing to a prince who backed his demands with millions. Thus that same grand vizier, who had formerly promised in the most solemn manner to lead the king of Sweden into Muscovy with two hundred thousand men, had the assurance to make him a proposal of consenting to the sacrifice of general Mazeppa. Charles was enraged at this demand. It is hard to say how far the vizier might have pushed the affair, had not Mazeppa, who was now seventy years of age, died exactly at this juncture. The king's grief and indignation were greatly encreased, when he understood that Tolstoy, now become the czar's ambassador at the Porte, was served in public by the Swedes that had been made slaves at Pultowa, and that the brave soldiers were daily sold in the market at Constantinople. Nay, the Russian ambassador made no scruple of declaring openly, that the Mussulman troops at Bender were

were placed there rather with a view to secure the king's person, than to do him any honour.

Charles, abandoned by the grand vizier, and vanquished by the czar's money in Turkey, as he had been by his arms in the Ukraine, saw himself deceived and despised by the Porte, and almost a prisoner among the Tartars. His attendants began to despair. Himself alone remained firm, and never appeared in the least dejected. Convinced that the sultan was ignorant of the intrigues of Chourlouli Ali, his grand vizier, he resolved to acquaint him with them; and Poniatowsky undertook the execution of this hazardous enterprize. The grand seignior goes every Friday to the mosque, surrounded by his solaks, a kind of guards, whose turbans are adorned with such high feathers as to conceal the sultan from the view of the people. When any one has a petition to present to the grand seignior, he endeavours to mingle with the guards, and holds the petition aloft. Sometimes the sultan condescends to receive it himself; but for the most part he orders an aga to take charge of it, and upon his return from the mosque causes the petition to be laid before him. There is no fear of any one's daring to importune him with useless memorials and trifling petitions, inasmuch as they write less at Constantinople in a whole year than they do at Paris in one day. There is still less danger of any memorials being presented against the ministers, to whom he commonly remits them unread. Poniatowsky had no other way of conveying the king of Sweden's complaint to the grand seignior. He drew up a heavy charge against the grand vizier. Mr.

de Feriol, who was then the French ambassador, and who gave me an account of the whole affair, got the memorial translated into the Turkish tongue. A Greek was hired to present it: this Greek mingling with the guards of the grand seignior, held the paper so high for so long a time, and made such a noise, that the sultan observed him and took the memorial himself.

This method of presenting memorials to the sultan against his viziers was frequently employed. A Swede, called Leloing, gave in another petition a few days after. Thus in the Turkish empire Charles XII. was reduced to the necessity of using the same expedients with an oppressed subject.

Some days after this, the sultan sent the king of Sweden, as the only answer to his complaints, five and twenty Arabian horses, one of which, that had carried his highness, was covered with a saddle and housings enriched with precious stones, with stirrups of massy gold. This present was accompanied with an obliging letter, but conceived in general terms, and such as gave reason to suspect that the minister had done nothing without the sultan's consent. Chourlouli too, who was a perfect master of the art of dissimulation, sent the king five very curious horses. But Charles, with a lofty air, said to the person that brought them; "Go back to your master, and tell him that I don't receive presents from my enemies."

Poniatowsky having already ventured to present a petition against the grand vizier, he next formed the bold design of deposing him. Understanding that the vizier was disagreeable to the
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sultaneſs mother, and that he was hated by Kiſlar Aga, the chief of the black eunuchs, and by the aga of the janiffaries, he prompted them all three to ſpeak againſt him. It was ſomething very ſurpriſing to ſee a Chriſtian, a Pole, an uncommiſſioned agent of the king of Sweden, who had taken refuge among the Turks, caballing almoſt openly at the Porte againſt a viceroy of the Ottoman empire, who, at the ſame time, was both an able miniſter and a favourite of his maſter. Poniatowsky could never have ſucceeded, and the bare attempt would have coſt him his life, had not a power ſuperior to all thoſe that operated in his favour given a finiſhing ſtroke to the fortune of the grand vizier Chourlouli.

The ſultan had a young favourite, who afterwards governed the Ottoman empire, and was killed in Hungary in 1716, at the battle of Peterwaradin, which prince Eugene of Savoy gained over the Turks. His name was Coumourgi Ali-Baſha: his birth was much the ſame with that of Chourlouli; being the ſon of a coal-heaver, as Coumourgi imports, Coumour in the Turkiſh tongue ſignifying coal. The emperor Achmet II. uncle of Achmet III. having met Coumourgi, while yet an infant, in a little wood near Adrianople, was ſtruck with his extraordinary beauty, and cauſed him to be conducted to the ſeraglio. Muſtapha, the eldeſt ſon and ſucceſſor of Mahomet, was very fond of him; and Achmet III. made him his favourite. He had then no other place but that of ſeliſtar-aga, or ſword-bearer to the crown. His extreme youth did not allow him to make any open pretenſions to the poſt of grand vizier; and yet he had the ambition to aſpire to

it. The Swedish faction could never draw over this favourite to their side. He had never been a friend to Charles, or to any other Christian prince, or to any of their ministers; but on this occasion he served king Charles XII. without intending to do so. He joined with the sultaneſs Valide and the great officers of the Porte, to hasten the ruin of Chourlouli, who was equally hated by them all. This old minister, who had served his master for a long time, and with great fidelity, fell a victim to the caprice of a boy, and the intrigues of a foreigner. He was stripped of his dignity and riches. His wife, who was the daughter of the late sultan Mustapha, was taken from him; and himself was banished to Caffa, formerly called Theodosia, in Crim Tartary. The bull, that is to say, the seal of the empire, was given to Numan Couprougli, grandson to the great Couprougli, who took Candia. This new vizier was, what ill-formed Christians can hardly believe it possible for a Turk to be, a man of incorruptible virtue, a scrupulous observer of the law, and one who frequently opposed the rigid rules of justice to the wayward will of the sultan. He could not endure to hear of a war against Muscovy, which he considered as alike unjust and unnecessary; but the same attachment to his law, that prevented his making war upon the czar, contrary to the faith of treaties, made him observe the rights of hospitality towards the king of Sweden. "The law forbids you, would he say to his master, to attack the czar, who has done you no injury; but it commands you to succour the king of Sweden, who is an unfortunate prince in your dominions." He sent his majesty

jesty eight hundred purses, (every purse containing five hundred crowns,) and advised him to return peaceably to his own dominions, either through the territories of the emperor of Germany, or in some of the French vessels which then lay in the harbour of Constantinople, and which Mr. de Feriol, the French ambassador at the Porte, offered to Charles to conduct him to Marseilles. Count Poniatowsky carried on his negotiations with greater activity than ever, and acquired such a superiority with an incorruptible vizier, as the gold of the Muscovites was unable to counterbalance. The Russian faction thought it would be their wisest course to poison such a dangerous negotiator. They gained one of his domestics, who was to give him the poison in a dish of coffee; but the crime was discovered before it was carried into execution. The poison was found in the hands of the domestick, contained in a small vial, which was carried to the grand seignior. The poisoner was tried in a full divan, and condemned to the gallies; the justice of the Turks never inflicting death for those crimes that have not been perpetrated.

Charles, who could not be persuaded but that, sooner or later, he should be able to engage the Turkish empire in a war against Muscovy, rejected every proposal that was made for his peaceable return home. He was continually representing to the Turks the formidable power of that same czar, whom he had so long despised. His emissaries were perpetually insinuating that Peter Alexiowitz wanted to make himself master of the navigation of the Black Sea; and that after having subdued the Cossacks, he would carry his arms into Crim Tartary. Sometimes these re-

presentations aroused the Porte, at others the Russian ministers destroyed all their effect.

While Charles XII. made his fate depend upon the caprice of viziers, and while he was alternately receiving favours and affronts from a foreign power, presenting petitions to the sultan, and subsisting upon his bounty in a desert, all his enemies, awakened from their former lethargy, invaded his dominions.

The battle of Pultowa was the first signal to a revolution in Poland. Augustus returned to that country, protesting against his abdication, and the peace of Altranstad, and publicly accusing Charles XII. whom he no longer feared, of robbery and cruelty. He imprisoned Fingsten and Imhoff, his plenipotentiaries, who had signed his abdication, as if in so doing they had exceeded their orders, and betrayed their master. His Saxon troops, which had been the pretext of his dethronement, conducted him back to Warsaw, accompanied by most of the Polish palatines, who having formerly sworn fidelity to him, had afterwards done the same to Stanislaus, and were now come to do it again to Augustus. Siniawski himself rejoined his party, and laying aside the ambitious hopes of raising himself to the royal dignity, was content to remain grand-general of the crown. Fleming, his first minister, who had been obliged to leave Saxony, for fear of being delivered up with Patkul, now contributed by his address to bring back to his master's interest a great part of the Polish nobility.

The pope absolved the people from the oath of allegiance which they had taken to Stanislaus. This step of the holy father, seasonably taken,
and

and supported by the forces of Augustus, was of considerable weight. It strengthened the credit of the court of Rome in Poland, the natives of which had no inclination at that time to dispute with the sovereign pontiffs their chimerical right of interfering in the temporal concerns of princes. Every one was ready to submit anew to the authority of Augustus, and willingly received an absolution, which, however useless in itself, the nuncio took care to represent as absolutely necessary.

The power of Charles and the grandeur of Sweden, were now drawing towards their last period. Above ten crowned heads had long beheld with fear and envy the Swedish power extending itself far beyond its natural bounds, on the other side of the Baltic sea, from the Duna to the Elbe. The fall of Charles, and his absence, revived the interested views, and re-kindled the jealousies of all these princes, which had for a long time been laid asleep by treaties, and by their inability to break them.

The czar, who was more powerful than all of them put together, improving his late victory, took Vibourg; and all Carelia, over-run Finland, laid siege to Riga, and sent a body of forces into Poland to aid Augustus in recovering his throne. The czar was, at that time what Charles had been formerly, the arbiter of Poland and the North; but all his measures were directed to the promotion of his own interest: whereas Charles had never been prompted by any other motive than those of revenge and glory. The Swedish monarch had succoured his allies and crushed his enemies, without reaping any fruit from his vic-

tories. The czar behaving more like a prince, and less like a hero, would not assist the king of Poland, but on condition that Livonia should be ceded to him; and that that province, for which Augustus had kindled the war, should remain for ever in the possession of the Muscovites.

The king of Denmark, forgetting the treaty of Travendal, as Augustus had that of Altranstad, began to entertain thoughts of making himself master of the dutchies of Holstein and Bremen, to which he renewed his pretensions. The king of Prussia had ancient claims upon Swedish Pomerania, which he now resolved to revive. The duke of Mecklenburg was vexed to see that the Swedes were still in possession of Wismar, the finest town in the dutchy. This prince was to marry a niece of the Russian emperor; and the czar wanted only a pretext for establishing himself in Germany, after the example of the Swedes. George, elector of Hanover, was likewise desirous of enriching himself with Charles's spoils. The bishop of Munster too would have been willing enough to avail himself of some of his claims, had he been able to support them.

About twelve or thirteen thousand Swedes defended Pomerania, and the other countries which Charles possessed in Germany; and it was there that the war was most likely to begin. This storm alarmed the emperor and his allies. It is a law of the empire, that whoever invades one of its provinces shall be reputed an enemy to the whole Germanic body.

But there was a still greater difficulty. All these princes, except the czar, were then united against Lewis XIV. whose power, for a long time, had

had been as formidable to the empire as that of Charles.

At the beginning of this century, Germany found itself hard pressed from south to north by the armies of France and Sweden. The French had passed the Danube, and the Swedes the Oder, and had their forces, victorious as they then were, been joined together, the empire had been utterly undone. But the same fatality that ruined Sweden had likewise humbled France. Sweden, however, had still some resources left; and Lewis XIV. carried on the war with vigour, though without success. Should Pomerania and the dutchy of Bremen become the theatre of the war, it was to be feared that the empire would suffer by such an event; and that being weakened on that side, it would be less able to withstand the arms of Lewis XIV. To prevent this danger, the emperor, the princes of the empire, Anne queen of England, and the states-general of the United Provinces concluded at the Hague, about the end of the year 1709, one of the most singular treaties that ever was signed.

It was stipulated by these powers, that the war against the Swedes should not be in Pomerania, nor in any of the German provinces; and that the enemies of Charles XII. should be at liberty to attack him any where else. Even the czar and the king of Poland acceded to this treaty, in which they caused to be inserted an article as extraordinary as the treaty itself, viz. that the twelve thousand Swedes who were in Pomerania should not be allowed to leave it in order to defend their other provinces.

To secure the execution of the treaty, and to maintain this imaginary neutrality, it was proposed

posed to assemble an army, which should encamp on the banks of the Oder. An unheard-of novelty sure, to levy an army in order to prevent a war! nay, the very princes who were to pay the army, were most of them concerned to commence the war which they thus affected to prevent. The treaty imported that the army should be composed of the troops of the emperor, of the king of Prussia, of the elector of Hanover, of the landgrave of Hesse, and of the bishop of Munster.

The issue of this project was such as might naturally have been expected: it was not carried into execution. The princes who were to have furnished their contingents for compleating the army, contributed nothing. There were not two regiments formed. Every body talked of a neutrality, but no body observed it; and the princes of the North, who had any quarrel with the king of Sweden, were left at full liberty to dispute with each other the spoils of that prince.

During these transactions, the czar having quartered his troops in Lithuania, and given orders for pushing the siege of Riga, returned to Moscow to shew his people a sight as new as any thing he had hitherto done in the kingdom. This was a triumph of nearly the same nature with that of the ancient Romans. He made his entry into Moscow on the first of January, 1710, under seven triumphant arches, erected in the streets, and adorned with every thing which the climate could furnish, or which a flourishing commerce (rendered such by his care) could import. The procession began with a regiment of guards, followed

lowed by the pieces of artillery taken from the Swedes at Lesno and Pultowa, each of which was drawn by eight horses, covered with scarlet housings hanging down to the ground. Next came the standards, kettle-drums, and colours won at these two battles, carried by the officers and soldiers who had taken them. All these spoils were followed by the finest troops of the czar. After they had filed off, there appeared in a chariot, made on purpose*, the litter of Charles XII. found in the field of battle at Pultowa, all shattered with two cannon shot. Behind the litter marched all the prisoners two and two, among whom was count Piper, first minister of Sweden, the famous marechal Renschild, the count de Levenhaupt, the generals Slipenback, Stackelberg, and Hamilton, and all the officers, who were afterwards dispersed through Great Russia. Immediately after these appeared the czar himself, mounted on the same horse which he rode at the battle of Pultowa: a little after him came the generals who had had a share in the success of the day. Next followed a regiment of guards; and the whole was closed by the waggons loaded with the Swedish ammunition.

This grand procession was accompanied with the ringing of all the bells in Moscow, with the sound of drums, kettle-drums, trumpets, and an infinite number of musical instruments, which played

* Here Mr. Norberg, the confessor of Charles XII. finds fault with the author, and affirms that the litter was carried by the soldiers. With regard to these circumstances (which are of great importance to be sure) we appeal to those who saw them.

in concert, together with the vollies of two hundred pieces of cannon, amidst the acclamations of five hundred thousand men, who, at every stop the czar made in this triumphal entry, cried out, "Long live the emperor our father."

This dazzling exhibition augmented the people's veneration for his person, and perhaps made him appear greater in their eyes than all the solid advantages they had derived from his labours. Mean while he continued the blockade of Riga; and the generals made themselves masters of the rest of Livonia and part of Finland. At the same time the king of Denmark came with his whole fleet to make a descent upon Sweden, where he landed seventeen thousand men, and left them under the command of the count de Reventlau.

Sweden was, at that time, governed by a regency, composed of some senators, who were appointed by the king before he left Stockholm. The body of the senate, imagining that the government of right belonged to them, became jealous of the regency; and the state suffered by these divisions. But, when after the battle of Pultowa, the first news was brought to Stockholm, that the king was at Bender, at the mercy of the Turks and Tartars, and that the Danes had invaded Schonen, and taken the town of Helfimburg, all their jealousies immediately vanished, and they bent their whole attention towards the preservation of the kingdom. Sweden was now drained, in a great measure, of regular troops; for though Charles had always made his great expeditions at the head of small armies, yet the innumerable battles he had fought in the space of
nine

nine years, the necessity he was under of recruiting his forces with continual supplies, and maintaining his garrisons, and the standing army he was constantly obliged to keep in Finland, Ingria, Livonia, Pomerania, Bremen, and Verden; all these particulars had cost Sweden, during the course of the war, above two hundred and fifty thousand men; so that there were not eight thousand of the ancient troops remaining, which, together with the new-raised militia, was the only resources Sweden had to trust to for the defence of her territories.

The nation is naturally warlike; and all subjects insensibly imbibe the spirit of their sovereign. From one end of the country to the other nothing was talked of but the prodigious achievements of Charles and his generals, and of the old regiments that fought under them at Narva, Duna, Clissa, Pultusk, and Hollofin. Hence the very lowest of the Swedes were fired with a spirit of emulation and glory; and this heroic impulse was greatly augmented by their affection for their king, their pity for his misfortunes, and their implacable hatred to the Danes. In several other countries the peasants are slaves, or treated as such; but here they compose a part of the state, are considered as citizens, and, of consequence, are capable of more exalted sentiments; so that these new-raised militia became, in a short time, the best troops of the North.

General Steinbock, by order of the regency, put himself at the head of eight thousand of the ancient troops, and about twelve thousand of these new militia, to go in pursuit of the Danes, who ravaged all the country about Elsinburg,
and

and had already extorted contributions from some of the more inland provinces.

There was neither time nor opportunity to give regimental cloaths to the new militia. Most of these boors came in their flaxen frocks, having pistols tied to their girdles with cords. Steinbock, at the head of this strange army, overtook the Danes about three leagues from Elsinburg on the tenth of March, 1710. He had designed to give his troops a few days rest, to raise intrenchments, and to allow his new soldiers a sufficient time to habituate themselves to the face of the enemy ; but all the peasants called out for battle the very day on which they arrived.

I have been assured by some of the officers who were present, that they saw almost every individual soldier foaming with rage and choler ; so great is the national hatred of the Swedes to the Danes. Steinbock availed himself of this ardour of spirit, which, in the day of battle, is of as much consequence as military discipline. He attacked the Danes ; and there one might have seen a thing, to which, perhaps, the whole history of mankind cannot furnish above two similar examples ; the new-raised militia, in their first assault, equalled the intrepidity of veteran soldiers. Two regiments of these undisciplined peasants cut in pieces the regiment of the king of Denmark's guards, of which there remained only ten men alive.

The Danes, being entirely routed, retired under the cannon of Elsinburg. The passage from Sweden to Zealand is so short, that the king of Denmark received the news of the defeat of his army in Sweden the same day on which it happened ;
and

and sent his fleet to bring off the shattered remains of his army. The Danes quitted Sweden with precipitation five days after the battle; but unable to carry off their horses, and unwilling to leave them to the enemy, they killed them all in the suburbs in Elsinburg, and set fire to their provisions, burning their corn and baggage, and leaving in Elsinburg four thousand wounded, the greatest part of whom died of the infection, occasioned by so many dead horses and for want of provision, of which even their countrymen deprived them, in order to prevent the Swedes from enjoying any share of it.

Mean while, the peasants of Dalecarlia having heard in the heart of their forests, that their king was a prisoner among the Turks, sent a deputation to the regency of Stockholm, and offered to go at their own expence, to the number of twenty thousand men, to rescue their master from the hands of his enemies. This proposal, which was better calculated to express their courage and loyalty, than to produce any real advantage, was received with pleasure, though it was not accepted; and the senators took care to acquaint the king with it, at the same time that they sent him a circumstantial account of the battle of Elsinburg.

Charles received this agreeable news in his camp near Bender, in July, 1710. And another event that happened soon after contributed still more to strengthen his hopes.

The grand vizier, Couprougli, who opposed all his designs, was dismissed from his office, after having filled it for two months. The little court of Charles XII. and those who still adhered to him

him in Poland, gave out that Charles made and unmade the viziers, and governed the Turkish empire from his retreat at Bender. But he had no hand in the disgrace of that favourite. The rigid probity of the vizier was said to have been the sole cause of his fall. His predecessor had paid the Janissaries not out of the Imperial treasury, but with the money which he procured by extortion. Couprongli paid them out of the treasury. Achmet reproached him with preferring the interests of the subject to that of the emperor: "Your predecessors, said he, well knew how to find other means of paying my troops." "If, replied the grand vizier, he had the art of enriching your highness by rapine, it is an art of which I am proud to say I am entirely ignorant."

The profound secrecy that prevails in the seraglio, seldom allows such particulars to transpire to the publick; but this fact was published along with Couprongli's disgrace. The vizier's boldness did not cost him his head, because true virtue is sometimes respected, even while it displeases. He was permitted to retire to the island of Negropont. These particulars I learned from the letters of Mr. Bru, my relation, first druggist to the Ottoman Porte, and I have retold them in order to display the true spirit of that government.

After this the grand seignior recalled from Aleppo Baltagi Mehemet, basha of Syria, who had been grand vizier before Chourlouli. The baltagis of the seraglio so called from balta, which signifies an axe, are slaves employed to cut wood for the use of the princes of the Ottoman blood,

blood, and the sultanas. This vizier had been a baltagi in his youth, and had ever since retained the name of that office, according to the custom of the Turks, who are not ashamed to take the name of their first profession, or of that of their father, or even of the place of their birth.

While Baltagi Mehemet was a valet in the seraglio, he was so happy as to perform some little services to prince Achmet, who was then a prisoner of state in the reign of his brother Mustafa. The princes of the Ottoman blood are allowed to keep for their pleasure a few women, who are past the age of child-bearing, (and that age arrives very early in Turkey) but still agreeable enough to please. As soon as Achmet became sultan, he gave one of these female slaves, for whom he had had a great affection, in marriage to Baltagi Mehemet. This woman by her intrigues made her husband grand vizier; another intrigue displaced him; and a third made him grand vizier again.

When Baltagi Mehemet received the bull of the empire, he found the party of the king of Sweden prevailing in the seraglio. The sultane's Valide, Ali Coumourg, the grand seignior's favourite, the kislar aga, chief of the black eunuchs, and the aga of the janissaries were all for a war against the czar: the sultan was fixed in the same resolution; and the first order he gave the grand vizier was to go and attack the Muscovites with two hundred thousand men. Baltagi had never made a campaign; yet was he not an idiot, as the Swedes, who were dissatisfied with his conduct, affected to represent him. Upon receiving

ceiving from the grand seignior a sabre, adorned with precious stones, he addressed him in the following terms: "Your highness knows, said he, that I was brought up to handle an axe and cleave wood, not to wield a sword and command your armies. Nevertheless, I will endeavour to serve you to the best of my power; but should I fail of success, remember I have entreated you beforehand not to impute the blame to me." The sultan assured him he might depend upon his friendship; and the vizier prepared to carry his orders into execution.

The first step of the Ottoman Porte was to imprison the Russian ambassador in the castle of the Seven Towers. 'Tis the custom of the Turks to begin by arresting the ministers of those princes against whom they declare war. Strict observers of hospitality in every thing else, in this they violate the most sacred law of nations. This injustice, however, they commit under the pretext of equity, believing themselves, or, at least, desirous to make others believe, that they never undertake any but just wars, because they are consecrated by the approbation of their musti. Upon this principle they take up arms (as they imagine) to chastise the violators of treaties; and think they have a right to punish the ambassadors of those kings with whom they are at enmity, as being accomplices in the treachery of their masters.

Add to this the ridiculous contempt they affect to entertain for Christian princes, and their ambassadors, the latter of whom they commonly consider in no other light than as the consuls of merchants.

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The han of Crim Tartary, whom we call the kam, received orders to hold himself in readiness with forty thousand Tartars. This prince is sovereign of Nagai, Budziack, part of Circassia, and all Crim Tartary, a province anciently known by the name of Taurica Chersonesus, into which the Greeks carried their arms and commerce, and founded powerful cities; and into which, in after times, the Genoese penetrated, when they were masters of the trade of Europe. In this country are to be seen the ruins of some Greek cities, and some monuments of the Genoese, which still subsist in the midst of desolation and barbarity.

The kam is called emperor by his own subjects; but with this grand title, he is, nevertheless, the slave of the Porte. The Ottoman blood, from which the kams are sprung, and the right they pretend to have to the empire of the Turks, upon the failure of the grand seignior's race, render their family respectable, and their persons formidable even to the sultan himself. 'Tis for this reason that the grand seignior dares not venture to destroy the race of the kams of Tartary; though indeed he seldom allows any of these princes to live to a great age. Their conduct is closely inspected by the neighbouring basha's: their dominions are surrounded with janissaries; their inclinations thwarted by the grand viziers; and their designs always suspected. If the Tartars complain of the kam, the Porte deposes him under that pretext. If he is too popular, it is still a higher crime, for which he suffers a more severe punishment. Thus almost all of them are driven from sovereign power into exile, and end their days at
Rhodes,

Rhodes, which is commonly their prison and their grave.

The Tartars, their subjects, are the most thievish people on earth, and, what is hardly to be credited, are, at the same time, the most hospitable. They will go fifty leagues from home to attack a caravan, or pillage a town; and yet when any stranger happens to travel through their country, he is not only received, lodged, and maintained every where, but through whatever place he passes, the inhabitants dispute with each other the honour of having him for their guest; and the master of the house, his wife, and daughters, are ambitious to serve him. This inviolable regard to hospitality they have derived from their ancestors the Scythians; and they still preserve it, because the small number of strangers that travel among them, and the low price of all sorts of provisions, render the practice of such a virtue no ways burthensome.

When the Tartars go to war, in conjunction with the Ottoman army, they are maintained by the grand seignior, but the booty they get is their only pay; and hence it is that they are much fitter for plundering than fighting.

The kam, won over to the king of Sweden's interest by presents and promises, at first obtained leave to appoint the general rendezvous of the troops at Bender, and even under the eye of Charles XII. in order the more effectually to convince that monarch, that the war was undertaken solely for his sake.

The new vizier, Baltagi Mehemet, who did not lie under the same engagements, would not flatter a foreign prince so highly. He changed the
order

order; and Adrianople was the place fixed for the rendezvous of this great army. 'Tis always in the vast and fertile plains of Adrianople that the Turks assemble their armies, when they are going to make war upon the Christians: there the troops that arrive from Asia and Africa repose and refresh themselves for a few weeks; but the grand vizier, in order to anticipate the preparations of the czar, allowed the army but three days rest, and then marched to the Danube, from whence he advanced into Bessarabia.

The Turkish troops now-a-days are not near so formidable as they were in ancient times, when they conquered so many kingdoms in Asia, Africa, and Europe; when, by their great strength of body, their valour, and numbers, they triumphed over enemies less robust and worse disciplined than themselves. But now that the Christians are more expert in the art of war, they seldom fail to beat the Turks in a pitched battle, and even with unequal numbers. If the Ottoman empire hath made some conquests in latter times, it hath only been over the republic of Venice, esteemed more wise than warlike, defended by strangers, and little succoured by the Christian princes, who are perpetually at variance among themselves.

The janissaries and spahis always attack in a confused and disorderly manner: they are incapable of obeying the commands of their general, or of recovering their ranks. Their cavalry, which, considering the goodness and fleetness of their horses, ought to be excellent, is unable to sustain the shock of the German cavalry. Their infantry cannot, even to this day, make use of

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fixed

fixed bayonets to any purpose. Add to this that the Turks have not had an able general since the time of Couprougli, who conquered the isle of Candia. A slave brought up in the indolence and silence of a seraglio, made a vizier by interest, and a general against his will, led a raw army, without discipline or experience, against Russian troops, hardened by twelve campaigns, and proud of having conquered the Swedes.

The czar, in all appearance, must have vanquished Baltagi Mehemet; but was guilty of the same fault, with regard to the Turks, which the king of Sweden had committed with regard to him: he despised his enemy too much. Upon the first news of the Turkish preparations, he left Moscow, and, having given orders for turning the siege of Riga into a blockade, assembled a body of eighty thousand men on the frontiers of Poland*. With this army he took the road
through

* The chaplain Norberg alledges, that the czar compelled every fourth man in his dominions, able to bear arms, to follow him to the field. Had that been the case, his army would have amounted, at least, to two millions of men †.

† Our author seems to have forgot himself on this occasion. In civilized and populous countries, one fifth of the inhabitants is computed as the proportion of men able to carry arms. M. de Voltaire says, the number of people in Muscovy does not exceed fourteen or fifteen millions. The fifth part of fifteen amounts to three; every fourth man, therefore, if chose fit for war, would bring the number to seven hundred and fifty thousand. But great part of the czar's subjects consisted of people who never served in war; such as the Laplanders, the Samoiedes, and the clergy: so that we must understand Norberg-as
meaning

through Moldavia and Walachia, formerly the country of the Dacee, but now inhabited by Greek Christians, who are tributaries to the grand seignior.

Moldavia was, at that time, governed by prince Cantemir, a Grecian by birth, and who united in his person the talents of the ancient Greeks, the knowledge of letters and of arms. He was supposed to have sprung from the famous Timur, known by the name of Tamerlane. This extraction appeared more honourable than a Greek origin; and the reality of the descent is proved by the name of the conqueror. Timur, it is said, resembles Temir: the title of Can, which Timur possessed before he conquered Asia, is included in the word Cantemir: therefore prince Cantemir is descended from Tamerlane. Such are the foundations of most genealogies!

From whatever family Cantemir was sprung, he owed all his fortune to the Ottoman Porte. Hardly had he received the investiture of his principality, when he betrayed his benefactor the Turkish emperor to the czar, from whom he expected greater advantages. He fondly imagined that the conqueror of Charles XII. would easily triumph over a vizier of so little reputation, who had never made a campaign, and who had chosen for his Kiaia, or lieutenant, the superintendant of the customs in Turkey. He made no question but all his subjects would readily follow his standard, as the Greek patriarchs encouraged him in

meaning no more than that Peter enlisted every fourth man of the peasants actually found in the country, properly called Muscovy.

his revolt. The czar, therefore, having made a secret treaty with this prince, and received him into his army, advanced farther into the country ; and in June 1711, arrived on the northern banks of the river Hierafus, now Pruth, near Jazy, the capital of Moldavia.

As soon as the grand vizier heard that Peter Alexiowitz was advancing on that side, he immediately decamped, and following the course of the Danube, resolved to cross the river on a bridge of boats, near a town called Saccia, at the same place where Darius formerly built the bridge that long went by his name. The Turkish army proceeded with so much expedition, that it soon came in sight of the Muscovites, the river Pruth being between them.

The czar, sure of the prince of Moldavia, never dreamed that the Moldavians would fail him. But it frequently happens that the interest of the prince and that of the subjects are extremely different. The Moldavians liked the Turkish government, which is never fatal to any but the grandees, and affects a great lenity and mildness to its tributary states. They dreaded the Christians, and especially the Muscovites, who had always treated them with inhumanity. They carried all their provisions to the Ottoman army.

The undertakers who had engaged to furnish the Russians with provisions, performed that contract with the grand vizier which they had made with the czar. The Walachians, who border upon the Moldavians, discovered the same attachment to the Turks ; so much had the remembrance of the Russian cruelty alienated all their affections,

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The czar thus baulked of his hopes, which perhaps he had too rashly entertained, saw his army on a sudden destitute of forage and provisions. The soldiers deserted in troops; and the army was soon reduced to less than thirty thousand men, ready to perish with hunger. The czar experienced the same misfortunes upon the banks of the Pruth, in having delivered himself up to Cantemir, that Charles XII. had done at Pultowa, in relying upon Mazeppa. The Turks mean while passed the river, hemmed in the Russians, and formed an entrenched camp before them. It is somewhat surprising that the czar did not dispute the passage of the river, or, at least, repair this error by attacking the Turks immediately after the passage, instead of giving them time to destroy his army by hunger and fatigue. It would seem, indeed, that Peter did every thing in this campaign to hasten his own ruin. He found himself without provision; the river Pruth behind him; an hundred and fifty thousand Turks before him; while forty thousand Tartars were continually harrassing his army on the right and left. In this extremity, he made no scruple of acknowledging in public, that he was at least reduced to as bad a condition as his brother Charles had been at Pultowa.

Count Poniatowsky, an indefatigable agent of the king of Sweden, was in the grand vizier's army, together with some Poles and Swedes, all of whom considered the ruin of the czar as inevitable.

As soon as Poniatowsky saw that the armies must infallibly come to an engagement, he sent an express to the king of Sweden, who immedi-

ately set out from Bender, accompanied with forty officers, anticipating the mighty pleasure he should have in fighting the emperor of Muscovy. After many losses, and several marches in which he suffered severely, the czar was driven back to the Pruth, without any other defence than a chevaux de frize, and a few waggons. A part of the janissaries and spahis attacked his army in this disadvantageous situation; but their attack was disorderly, and the Russians defended themselves with a firmness and resolution, which nothing but despair and the presence of their prince could inspire.

The Turks were twice repulsed. Next day Mr. Poniatowsky advised the grand vizier to starve the Russian army, which being in want of every thing, would, together with its emperor, be obliged in a day's time to surrender at discretion.

The czar, since that time, hath more than once acknowledged, that, in the whole course of his life, he never felt any thing so exquisitely tormenting as the perturbation of mind in which he passed that night. He revolved in his thoughts all that he had been doing for so many years, to promote the glory and happiness of his country. He reflected that so many grand undertakings, which had always been interrupted by wars, were now, perhaps, going to perish with him, before they were fully accomplished. And he plainly perceived, that he must either be destroyed by famine, or attack about an hundred and eighty thousand men with feeble and dispirited troops, diminished one half in their number, the cavalry almost entirely dismounted, and the infantry exhausted with hunger and fatigue.

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He sent for general Czeremetof in the evening, and, without the least hesitation, or even so much as asking any one's advice, ordered him to have every thing in readiness next morning for attacking the Turks with fixed bayonets.

He likewise gave express orders that all the baggage should be burnt, and that no officer should keep above one waggon; that so, in case of a defeat, the enemy might not obtain the booty they expected.

Having settled every thing with the general relating to the battle, he retired to his tent, oppressed with grief, and racked with convulsions, a disease which often attacked him, and always recurred with redoubled violence, when he was under any perturbation of mind. He gave peremptory orders that no one should presume, under any pretext whatsoever, to enter his tent in the night; not chusing to receive any remonstrances against a resolution, which, however desperate, was absolutely necessary, and still less that any one should be a witness of the melancholy condition in which he was.

Mean while the greatest part of the baggage was burnt, according to his orders. All the army followed the example, though with much reluctance; and several buried their most valuable effects in the earth. The general officers were already giving orders for the march, and endeavouring to inspire the army with that courage which themselves did not possess. The soldiers, exhausted with hunger and fatigue, advanced without spirit and without hope. The women, with which the army was but too much crouded, set up the most lamentable shrieks and cries,

which contributed still more to enervate the men; and next morning every one expected death or slavery, as the only alternative. This picture is by no means exaggerated: it is exactly agreeable to the accounts that were given by some officers who served in the army.

There was, at that time, in the Russian camp, a woman as extraordinary, perhaps, as the czar himself. As yet she was known only by the name of Catharine. Her mother was a poor country-woman, called Erb-Magden, of the village of Ringen in Estonia, a province where the people held by villenage, and which was then subject to the Swedes. She never knew her father; but was baptized by the name of Martha. The vicar of the parish, out of pure charity, brought her up to the age of fourteen; after which she went to service at Marienburg, and hired herself to a Lutheran minister of that country, called Gluk.

In 1702, being then eighteen years of age, she married a Swedish dragoon. The day immediately succeeding her marriage, a party of the Swedish troops having been defeated by the Muscovites, the dragoon, who was in the action, disappeared, and was never heard of more; but whether or not he was taken prisoner, his wife could never learn, nor indeed from that time could she ever procure the least intelligence about him.

A few days after, being made a prisoner herself by general Baur, she entered into his service, and afterwards into that of mareschal Czeremetof, by whom she was given to Menzikoff, a man who experienced the greatest vicissitudes of fortune, having from a pastry-cook's boy been raised

raised to the rank of a general and a prince, and at last stripped of every thing and banished into Siberia, where he ended his days in misery and despair.

The first time the emperor saw her was one evening as he was at supper with prince Menzikoff, when he instantly fell in love with her. He married her privately in 1707: not seduced into this step by the artifices of the woman, but because he found her possessed of a strength and firmness of mind capable of seconding his schemes, and even of continuing them after his death. He had long before divorced his first wife Ottokesa, the daughter of a boyard, who was accused of opposing the alterations which he was introducing into his dominions. This crime, in the eyes of the czar, was the most heinous of all others. He would have no body in his family whose thoughts did not exactly correspond with his. He imagined he could discern in this foreign slave the qualities of a sovereign, though she had none of the virtues of her sex. For her sake he disdained and broke through the prejudices that would have fettered a man of an ordinary capacity. He caused her to be crowned empress. The same talents which made her the wife of Peter Alexiowitz, procured her the empire after the death of her husband; and Europe hath beheld with surprize a woman who could neither read* nor write,
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* The Si ur de la Motraye pretends that she had a good education, and could both read and write with great facility. The contrary of this, however, is known to all the world. The peasants of Livonia are never allowed to learn

compensating the want of education, and the weakness of her sex, by her invincible courage and resolution, and filling with glory the throne of a legislator.

When she married the czar, she renounced the Lutheran religion, in which she had been born, and embraced that of Muscovy. She was rebaptized, according to the rules of the Russian church, and instead of Martha, she took the name of Catharine, by which she was ever after known. This woman, being at the camp at Pruth, held a council with the general officers and the vice-chancellor, Schaffirof, while the czar was in his tent.

The result of their deliberations was, that they must necessarily sue for a peace to the Turks, and endeavour to persuade the czar to agree to such a measure. The vice-chancellor wrote a letter to the grand vizier in his master's name. This letter the czarina carried to the emperor's tent, notwithstanding his prohibition; and having with tears and intreaties prevailed upon him to sign it, she forthwith collected all her jewels, money, and most valuable effects, together with what money she could borrow from the general officers, and having by these means made up a considerable present, she sent it, with the czar's

learn either to read or write, owing to an ancient privilege, which is termed the benefit of clergy, formerly established among the barbarians who were converted to Christianity, and still subsisting in this country. The memoirs from which we have extracted this anecdote, farther add, that the princess Elizabeth, afterwards empress, always signed for her mother, from the time she could write.

letter

letter, to Osman Aga, lieutenant to the grand vizier. Mehemet Baltagi replied with the lofty air of a vizier and a conqueror, "Let the czar send me his prime minister, and I shall then consider what is to be done." The vice-chancellor, Schaffirof, immediately repaired to the Turkish camp, with some presents which he publicly offered to the grand vizier, sufficient to shew him that they stood in need of his clemency, but too inconsiderable to corrupt his integrity.

The vizier at first demanded, that the czar, with his whole army, should surrender at discretion. The vice-chancellor replied, that his master was going to attack him in a quarter of an hour, and that the Russians would perish to a man, rather than submit to such dishonourable conditions. Schaffirof's application was strongly seconded by the remonstrances of Osman.

Mehemet Baltagi was no warrior: he saw that the janissaries had been repulsed the day before; so that Osman easily prevailed upon him not to risk such certain advantages upon the fate of a battle. He accordingly granted a suspension of arms for six hours, in which time the terms of the treaty might be fully settled.

During the parley, there happened a trifling incident, which plainly shews that the Turks often keep their word with a more scrupulous exactness than we imagine. Two Italian gentlemen, relations of M. Brillo, lieutenant-colonel of a regiment of grenadiers in the czar's service, having gone to some distance in quest of forage, were taken prisoners by some Tartars, who brought them to the camp, and offered to sell them to an officer of the janissaries. The Turk

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enraged at their presumption, in having thus violated the truce, arrested the Tartars, and carried them himself before the grand vizier, together with the two prisoners.

The vizier sent back the two gentlemen to the czar's camp, and ordered the Tartars, who had been chiefly concerned in carrying them off, to be beheaded.

Mean while the Kam of Tartary opposed the conclusion of the treaty, which would deprive him of all hopes of plunder; and Poniatowsky seconded the Kam with the strongest arguments. But Osman carried his point against the importunity of the Tartar, and the insinuations of Poniatowsky.

The vizier thought, that by concluding an advantageous peace, he should sufficiently consult the honour and interest of his master. He insisted that the Russians should restore Azoph, burn the gallies which lay in that harbour, demolish the important citadels built upon the Palus Mæotis, and deliver all the cannon and ammunition of these fortresses into the hands of the grand seignior; that the czar should withdraw his troops from Poland, give no farther disturbance to the few Cossacks that were under the protection of the Poles, nor to those who were subject to the Turks; and that for the future he should pay the Tartars an annual subsidy of forty thousand sequins; an odious tribute long since imposed, but from which the czar had delivered his country.

At last the treaty was going to be signed, without so much as making mention of the king of Sweden. All that Poniatowsky could obtain of the vizier was to insert an article, by which the

czar

czar bound himself not to incommode the king in his return. And what is very remarkable, it was stipulated in this article, that the czar and Charles should make peace if they thought proper, and could agree upon the terms.

On these conditions the czar was permitted to retire with his army, cannon, artillery, colours, and baggage. The Turks supplied him with provisions, and he had plenty of every thing in his camp two hours after the signing of the treaty, which was begun, concluded, and signed the twenty-first of July 1711.

Just as the czar, now extricated from this terrible dilemma, was marching off with drums beating and colours flying, the king of Sweden arrived impatient for the fight, and happy in the thoughts of having his enemy in his power. He had rid post above fifty leagues from Bender to Jazy. He arrived the very moment that the Russians were beginning to retire in peace; but he could not penetrate to the Turkish camp, without passing the Pruth by a bridge, three leagues distant. Charles XII. who never did any thing like other men, swam across the river, at the hazard of being drowned, and traversed the Russian camp at the risk of being taken. At length he reached the Turkish army, and alighted at the tent of Poniatowsky, who informed me of all these particulars, both by letter and word of mouth. The count came to him with a sorrowful countenance, and told him that he had lost an opportunity, which perhaps he would never be able to recover.

The king, enflamed with resentment, flew straight away to the tent of the grand vizier, and

and with a stern air, reproached him with the treaty he had made. "I have a right, says the grand vizier, with a calm aspect, either to make peace or war." "But, adds the king, have not you the whole Russian army in your power?" "Our law commands us, replies the vizier with great gravity, to grant peace to our enemies, when they implore our mercy." "And does it command you, resumes the king in a passion, to make a bad treaty, when you may impose what laws you please? had not you a fair opportunity, if you would have embraced it, of leading the czar a prisoner to Constantinople?"

The Turk, driven to this extremity, replied very coldly, "And who would have governed his empire in his absence? It is not proper that all kings should leave their dominions." Charles made no other answer, than by a smile of indignation. He then threw himself down upon a sofa, and eying the vizier with an air of contempt and resentment, stretched out his leg, and entangling his spur in the Turk's robe, purposely tore it: after which, he rose up, remounted his horse, and with a sorrowful heart returned to Bender. Poniatowsky continued some time longer with the grand vizier, to try if he could not prevail upon him by more gentle means, to extort greater concessions from the czar; but the hour of prayer being come, the Turk, without answering a single word, went to wash and attend divine service.

END of the FIFTH BOOK.



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